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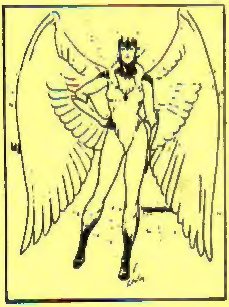

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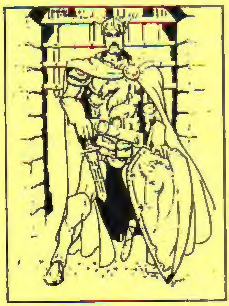

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SHADIS

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•Woodcuts in this issue were taken from various 18th and 19th century manuscripts•

BACKROOM MURMURING

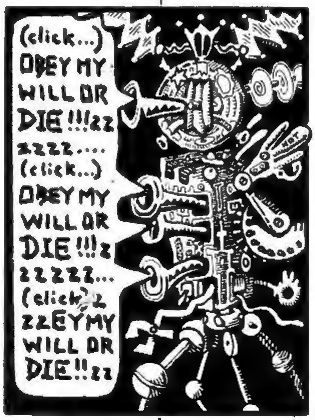
EDITORIAL

...and the adventure continues!

In the first issue of Shadis I stated that our magazine would be a new forum for role-players. The term 'forum' implies the exchange of ideas and information. That means a two-way flow of opinion and ideas. Until now, the majority of our magazine has been a one-way exchange, from our staff to you, the reader.

With this issue, we introduce two new columns which will appear frequently; ***Face Off*** and ***An Axe to Grind***.

Face Off is a forum of debate. Anyone who has role-played has quickly discovered that our hobby is racked with differences of opinion. We have Hack-and-Slashers vs. Thinking-Campaigns, Realism advocates vs. Pure-Fantasy etc. Everyone has their own idea of what makes good role-playing. Since everyone loves a good fight, Face Off will give you, the reader, a place to hack it out with those narrow minded boobs who don't think exactly the way you do. Besides being entertaining, Face Off should provide some thought-provoking material as well. The intent is not to create rifts in the gaming community, but rather to demonstrate that there are differences in gaming styles and opinions and that such differences are healthy for the hobby.



I'd like to point out something about this issue's installment of Face Off. To get the ball rolling Frank and I challenged Lew Herring and Joel Bozell to a debate over the merits of Resurrection in fantasy Role-playing. The agreement was that Frank and I would not alter our arguments upon receiving our opponent's material. Upon comparing the two sides it became obvious that our argument was running approximately two pages longer than our opponents. For the record, Lew and Joel have been promised the opportunity to further refute our attack in a future issue.

For that matter, all readers are invited to carry on the attack on either side if they feel they can contribute.

The other new feature is *An Axe to Grind*. This is our 'Guest Editorial' column. If you have something to say concerning role-playing or any related topic, this is your chance to climb up onto the pulpit and tell the world. Be forewarned that other readers may feel compelled to attack your stand in future issues. Such are the risks of voicing your opinion.

Although our full-time writers may make appearances in these new columns from time to time, these forums are primarily designed for you the readers. So USE THEM! Grab pen and paper and let us know what puts a chap in your hide.

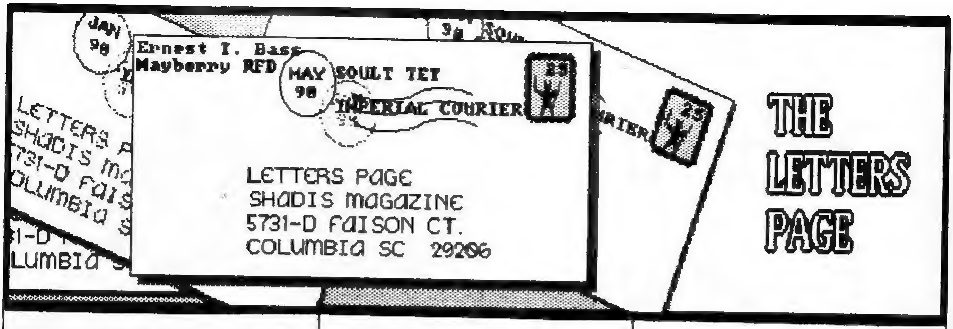
Of course, as I've begged and pleaded many times before, we do want and need articles, cartoons and artwork. So don't feel that you are restricted to these two forums.

Speaking of opinions and differences of opinion I'd like to take this time to express a few of my own feelings on Gaming-Style. Over the years I've confronted many militant players who would have all forms of playing abolished except for their own styles of play. All gamers tend to feel that the way their group plays the game is the best style of play. If you come from a group that thrives on Orc-bashing and Hack-and-slash then you will tend to think that those styles of play are superior. If your DM specializes in thinking-scenarios where brain over brawn carries the day, then you are apt to rally behind the same banner.

That's all that really matters. As one of our readers recently reminded us, *'Role-playing games are only very complicated forms of entertainment.'* It's not an exact science. There are no right or wrong ways to play them. You won't be barred from role-playing for conducting bizzare experiments in new rule-systems. So why all the fuss and more importantly why are we developing such attitudes? If your group would rather go Hobbit-Stomping and gain two experience levels per session, GO FOR IT. I won't be joining you in such outings, thanks just the same. Only time will tell if such a campaign can survive more than a handful of sessions. If your group is having fun and at the end of the night everyone is in good spirits, you've met the only qualification of good role-playing, having fun.

My own experience and tastes, have taught me that variety is the most important ingredient to long-term role-playing. Overall, I prefer a detailed, realistic campaign with a

Continued on page 62



**Note: Due to space limitations and the many 'long' letters we've received, some letters have been edited. While praises and 'atta boy' letters are greatly appreciated letters containing constructive criticisms, complaints or suggestions are more likely to see print in the Letters Page. We love the praise but it makes boring reading for other readers. At any rate keep the letters coming!*

Dear SHADIS,

Received my second copy of Shadis. You were right the quality has improved. The Criminal Justice article was great. Those types of supplements are always interesting.

Daniel Collins
Fountain, CO

Dear SHADIS,

To be very honest I thought the first issue was great! The second issue was fantastic! Now I am waiting for the third issue. It looks as if the magazine will only improve with each issue. Keep up the good work and keep the issues coming.

Jesse Seabolt
Elgin, SC

Dear SHADIS,

Loved the issue of Shadis you sent to us. Our whole management staff has been coveting it. I assume that if the quality of your writing stays high you will be selling a lot of issues.

Bill Jensen
The Source ST. Paul, MN

Dear SHADIS,

I gotta be honest with you guys. When I read issue no.#1 I thought to myself what a neat little magazine. I thought it would make good reading in between issues of the Dragon. Then I received Issue no.#2, WOW! Where did you guys come from? Great work! I'm not in the habit of writing to magazines and laying on praise but I wanted to make sure to tell you, keep doing what you're doing. Shadis definitely has a future!

Sam Lammer
Austin, Texas

Dear SHADIS,

I had a copy of SHADIS #2 passed along to me. Good Show! You have excellent production qualities. I thought your readers might be interested in my magazine, EGG (Experimental Game Group). I just released issue#6 which marks the end of its first year in print. The purpose of this magazine is to provide a forum for new game ideas. I print sets of rules and articles on the elusive concept of 'game philosophy'.

Most of the people who read EGG are miniatures gamers (ranging from Ancients to WWII) but we also play RPGs. There is definitely a trend in innovative historical games to include an element of role playing. There is also a parallel with live action RPGs. The English group *Wargames Developments* have been doing 'Mega' games for the last ten years (i.e. games with 60 players or so.)

Unfortunately, miniatures players and role players do not have a lot of common forums of communication. I would like to begin to break this wall down. I have played RPGs since 1976 and played miniatures since '77 and I can honestly say they have been a positive force in my life. But I like new ideas - so EGG was created.

Chris Engle
Editor, EGG

** Those of you interested in Chris' magazine will find more information in the Market Platz under 'Other Rags'*

Dear SHADIS,

Thanks for another enjoyable issue. I was eagerly awaiting the second issue and I am glad to say it was not a disappointment. Shadis is really shaping-up. Some people may not care if Shadis lives or fades into the oblivion that other aspiring magazines fall into, but I do care. I see a great deal of love put into this project, and I have talked to people who have wanted to see an alternative choice, so I know there is a market for Shadis.

There were not enough pages this issue again. I am enjoying the articles and the stories so much, that I want to see more per issue. I'm sure you have read at least a score of letters yelling for more pages already, so for now I'll shut up about the number of pages.

By-the-way, some of us are interested to know more about you, the Aldeac Group, and what equipment you are using to produce Shadis. Some bios

Continued on page 62

The World Beyond 'HackandSlash'

Part Three: Thieves

By John K. D'Amato

Elfwezel the thief is dead. In order to line his pockets with gold, he jumped a stranger in a dark back alley and tried to stab his victim in the back.

Nice try! Elfwezel's dagger did minimal damage, only succeeding in making the stranger mad as hell, and moments later Elfwezel lay in a crumpled heap with little fountains of blood pumping from several mortal wounds.

Elfwezel is dead, and as DM you think, "What a waste!" If Ed wanted a character who was going to attack everything that moved, he should have made Elfwezel a fighter and not a thief.

But the truth is that every character in AD&D is created, under existing rules, to operate as a fighter. The experience point system is designed to reward only those who kill other monsters/beings or amass gold.

"But the truth is that every character in AD&D is created, under existing rules, to operate as a fighter. The experience point system is designed to reward only those who kill other monsters/beings or amass gold."

For a thief, there is presently no advantage to the use of cunning or deception, and little satisfaction from outsmarting or conning one's way out of ticklish situations.

As we've seen in Parts I (clerics) and II (magic-users) of this series, there is a solution: that of awarding players experience points for doing those things particular to the class of their characters.

One way to get thieves to act more like thieves and less like fighters is to change the experience points DMs give for combat. If a player wants a character that acts like Robin Hood or Zorro, advise him to roll up a fighter -- thieves in your world live and die by their wits and their thieving abilities, not by their swords.

You'd be amazed how much you alter your game when you give thieves only half the experience points for monsters slain, wounded or s

scared off.

The only time thieves receive full experience points for these face-to-face encounters is if they are able to trick, con or negotiate the party or themselves past a monster intent on their ruin.

In essence, the fast-talking thief gets maximum points for being an adept con-man, and avoiding violent encounters.

Change the experience points for treasure gained also. What we're looking for here is "how" the treasure was procured.

Give half the points normally allotted, if the treasure taken is taken by force, i.e. a dragon slain. Double the experience points, however, if the treasure is stolen or was gained through thieving skills such as picking pockets, cut-pursing, or other devious means.

This rules change will cut down on the violence in your campaigns, give some incentive to using the thieving abilities they've been granted, and may force some thieves to plan their heists a little better.

In the same vein, I offer several rules revisions which emphasize and give credit for use of thieving abilities.

All locks are not the same – not in the real world or in the fantasy world. They range from simple locks, which can be picked by hairpins, to sliding puzzle locks and/or magical closures. Each takes a certain amount of time, and perhaps even a certain level of expertise.

Give 10 to 100 points for opening locks, with higher points allotted for the more difficult ones.

The same holds true with finding and removing traps; two separate skills every adventuring party relies upon its thieves to help out with.

Offer 50-500 points for these activities, with higher points for those more difficult to discover or diabolically devised. Small mechanical traps, such as poisoned needles, spring blades, etc. might fall somewhere in the middle range.

Climbing walls is another important ability for which thieves presently receive no experience points. Give them 40 points for every ten feet of wall scaled, if death or severe injury could be the result of failure.

I know, they should probably get credit under other circumstances also, but to gain experience points, your craftier players would have their thieves scaling every ten-foot wall in the city. Without some restriction, your adventure would deteriorate and they'd have you climbing the walls.

Guilds, and membership in them, are pretty important to the thieves I've seen operate in most campaigns, and accomplishing missions for the guild helps to establish reputations, aids in advancement, and sometimes adds power.

For those reasons, the DM can negotiate with the player character over the worth of a particular mission for the guild ahead of time or secretly write down what the accomplishment will be worth and show it to the player upon completion.

Up to 1,000 points can be awarded for completion of these missions. Again, the points awarded ought to be commensurate with the difficulty of a task or tasks at hand.

If the thief is to deliver a note to Tweedle down the street, and there is no danger, then I wouldn't award anything. But I might give 500 points, if the thief were asked to steal the King's favorite stallion from the well-guarded Royal Stables.

Finally, I'd award 500 points if the thief is able to form a band of thieves of four or more other like-minded individuals, and the character were selected as the leader of the band.

Of course, you have to be wary of players who will use this to form and disband groups simply to gain the points. Give only 500 points per band, and set some arbitrary time limit, perhaps three months game time, before such points could be awarded again.

Following these changes won't keep your thieves from cutting throats or engaging in sword fights as they are doing now. But, the suggestions

offered here will go a long way toward shifting the emphasis away from direct combat and placing more reliance upon abilities.

Adjust the points as you see fit, since nothing here is locked in stone. You probably can come up with several other categories for which thieves should be receiving points.

Incorporate those changes, always keeping in mind that playability and enjoyment are the keys to a great adventure.

Worksheet #3 provides a summary of the experience-point system for thieves. Feel free to reproduce this form for your own use. It can be used during a gaming session to keep track of the points a thief has earned. Modify the points as you see fit.

Until next issue - good gaming.□

EXPERIENCE POINT WORKSHEET# 3 THIEVES

1. 50% experience points for monsters slain, wounded, or scared off. Normal points for monsters negotiated with by thief. (Clarification: if a thief is able to negotiate the party or himself past a monster intent on their ruin he should gain the same points as a character who would have slain the monster. In essence the thief is getting maximum points for being a con-man.

2. 50% points for treasure gained through force. (i.e. a green dragon is slain in its lair and treasure is taken out). Normal points for treasure found under other circumstances. Double points for treasure stolen (i.e. dragon is sleeping), or gained through thieving skills such as picking pockets, cut-pursing or other devious means).

3. 10 to 100 points for picking/opening locks. Higher points alloted to more difficult closures such as sliding puzzle locks, or magical closures.

4. 50-100 points for finding/removing traps. Points at higher end of the scale are for more difficult to discover or diabolically set traps. Small mechanical traps such as poisoned needles, spring blades etc. would fall into the middle range.

5. 1,000 pts for completion of mission for one's guild. This again is dependent on difficulty and danger of mission.

6. 10 pts per ten feet of wall scaled, if death or severe injury is the result of failure.

7. 500 pts if band of thieves formed (4 or more) with character selected as leader. (once per band)

NOTES:

CHARACTER: _____

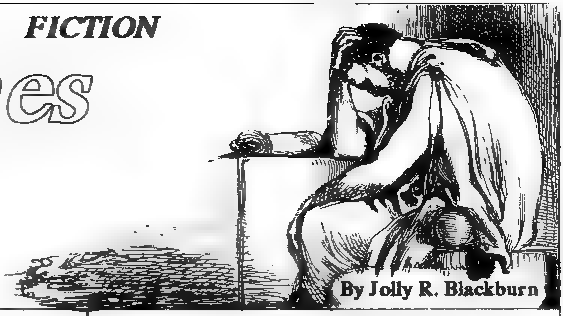
SESSION: _____

TOTAL:

PERMISSION GRANTED TO REPRODUCE

"Was damn foolish to be traveling the Galons alone son. Damn foolish!"

The Bones of Ruin



By Jolly R. Blackburn

PART III
THORNS AND BRIARS

"Cobblestones and highways will take you to the marvelous cities and wondrous temples. Those places built with dressed stone and cloaked in costly marble. But it is through the wilderness, in the untracked regions among the thorns and briars that you will find the treasures they were built with."

Smuel Laden, The Ginge Wars

Day 212, Year 108

Gandle picked up the straw broom from its resting place and began to sweep the cedar floor of his shop. Business was slow, especially now that winter was on the heels of autumn. But old habits were hard to break and he insisted on keeping his small shop tidy and clean.

The small village of Talert was dying a slow death. When the Rageans wrested control of the land from the Forcaran Empire, the military camps which guarded the silver and tin mines north of Talert were eliminated and the mines closed. With no more soldiers to cater to, the town began to shrink and fade. But it was a death that had been tapping Talert's strength for over a hundred years. Gandle figured he was somewhere around 110 years old, though he couldn't be sure. But he was old enough to remember the Forcaran soldiers walking the streets of Talert. Talert had been on the verge of becoming a major trading center in those days. There were no indications that its prosperity hung on so frail a thread.

For the past 75 years Gandle had owned and operated Talert's only furrier and leathergoods shop. When he wasn't at work on commissioned projects he was bartering for skins from the local hunters. For the past few winters the commissions were starting to dwindle and fewer hunters were returning to Talert to sit out the winter storms.

Gandle swept the small pile of debris he was gathering toward the front door of his shop and into the street where a stiff morning breeze carried it away. Satisfied, he leaned on the broom and gazed across Talert's single muddy thoroughfare. The Branded Ass, Talert's only tavern since the Lard Pale burned down the previous spring, beckoned to him. Many bright and wonderful nights had been spent in the Branded Ass. The stories and legends that had been spawned behind those doors would fill volumes of books. Gandle smiled to himself as memories of a better time rushed through his mind.

He was considering paying the tavern a visit when something caught his attention up the road to the north. Three haggard riders on weary horses with protruding ribs were just dismounting at the old water trough where once the town's marketplace had stood. It was now a vacant field with numerous wild saplings and weeds growing up through the cobblestones; a small rising forest mocking Talert's past.

The riders, all apparently young men, allowed their horses to drink their fill. One of the men knelt beside the trough and splashed his face with the cold water. Gandle shook his head in disgust. "It figures!", he said to himself, "first strangers in two weeks and they're not carrying any pelts."

Falsnare wiped the water from his brow and stood to his feet. He winced from the pain of his protesting back. He and his comrades had been on the road for many weeks.

He looked about him at the decaying buildings and spotted the gutted remains of the Lard Pale. He frowned and shook his head. Other than the absence of his favorite haunt, Talert had changed very little since his last visit. It had been two years or more since he and Scav Sagenthor had rode out of the muddy village with the mad-dreams of Raventhorpe spurring them on to battle. He gazed upon the overgrown marketplace and again shook his head. About 20 yards away in the center of the marketplace a weathered granite statue of three warriors stood encased in thick vines and ivy. As a child he used to play at the foot of the weathered statue. The three faceless heroes from Talert's past immortalized in stone had created the spark in his spirit that would not allow him to spend his life within the confines of the small town. Listening to Gandle's wild tales of the past and of the nameless heroes had set Falsnare's mind on far horizons.

Turning, he gazed down the road to Talert's small clutch of remaining buildings. He caught sight of Gandle in the door of his shop and smiled broadly.

"What did I tell you?" he said to his comrades, "The place hasn't changed a bit. I see Gandle has survived a few more winters."

"I can think of better places to be!" said Tasmar. Tasmar was a huge man. He was a half-breed grevan who bore the braided beard of a warrior and on his left arm proudly displayed self-inflicted scars signifying his warrior caste. He had rode to Talert under protest. He saw little future for their cause and longed for distant lands where the worries of the whole Sagenthor mess were far behind.

"Cheer up!" said Falsnare slapping him on the shoulder. "I'll bet you Scav has been here for weeks already."

"Not likely!" remarked the other man, Brantar, "I remember the look on Scav's face when we parted company. He had no plans for seeing this thing through!"

Falsnare smiled, "If you believed that my friend, you wouldn't have come all these miles. Come! I want to introduce you to a remarkable old man."

Falsnare took his horse by the reigns and led the group down the street toward Gandle's shop.

Talert and Gandle were forever one in his mind. Both were weathered ghosts, grey with age and stubbornly clinging to life. For some reason he just hadn't expected to ever see Gandle again.

As they approached, the old man strained his eyes, trying to size them up. When they were about fifty paces away, Gandle's eyes brightened with recognition.

"I can't believe my eyes!" he exclaimed. "News around here is that you died a year back."

Falsnare laughed and tied his horse off. "Morning Gandle! I see you still run the town!"

Gandle shrugged, "The mines will open up again. You'll see, then this place will show some life."

Gandle motioned for him to enter his shop. The three men followed him in. Falsnare took a deep breath and sighed. He loved the smell of fresh leather. Gandle took a pile of furs off a chair and placed them on the counter. "Here have a seat, I was just about to visit the Ass, but I've some good ale right here."

He placed a jug on the table and seated himself.

"So, you going to introduce this scraggly lot?"

Falsnare took the jug and removed the stopper, "Of course; this is Tasmar to my left and Brantar's over there, good friends one and all."

Gandle eyed Tasmar with suspicion. He'd seen enough grevans to recognize one and had learned enough of them to know he didn't like them. "Well I sure didn't expect to see you back here again. From the few rumors that reach my ears I figured your little saga had come to an end."

Falsnare nodded, "Well, we're here to meet up with Scav Sagenthor. You haven't seen him have you?"

Gandle's jaw went slack, "You mean to tell me he'd be foolish enough to head here?"

"So I was right! The damn sciver's not here!" barked Brantar, "He's probably basking in the sun in Kal Dez Amarnca by now. We were fools to come.."

Falsnare cast him a cold stare that quickly convinced him to be silent. He turned to Gandle, "There was trouble. Things fell apart. Half the men we'd gathered together broke at the first sign of trouble. Bastards! We barely managed to escape with our hides. Raventhorpe was captured. God knows if he is still alive. And Scav? Who know's what's become of him."

Gandle took the jug and downed a large gulp. "Well, I reckon Scav thought better then to head this way."

Tasmar grunted, "Scav was a might smarter than I gave him credit for. Smarter than this lot anyways. He's probably being hand fed by a whore somewhere and we're in this rat hole."

Gandle furrowed his brow at the remark. "Apparently this rat's ale is good enough for you!"

Falsnare shook his head, "I know Scav better than that. If he's not here something's happened."

Brantar raised his hands in despair, "Well this is one carcass that's not going to go lookin' to find out. I'm through with him and his oracles! And nearly through with you. For two months you've been tickling our ears with promises of gold and rank."

Tasmar nodded in agreement.

Falsnare had lost his spirit for badgering and let the comments go. He was deeply concerned now. Scav could be dead, or worse could have been taken prisoner.

"Well, we can sit out the winter here. If he hasn't shown by the thaw, I'm through with him as well."

He grabbed the jug of ale and took a long deep drink.

Day 223 Year 108

Scav sat up on the edge of his pallet and stretched. Time was doing much to heal his wounds, though the strange remedies and salves of Kandraas were probably more responsible for his rapid recovery.

For the past few days he had been feeling exceptionally well and in high spirits. Though his legs were still stiff and sheathed with long jagged scars, he had been able to walk short distances the last few days.

Being bedridden for the past weeks had given him plenty of time to think over his plight and he had come to terms with himself. If he was indeed fated to be the Emperor than man nor beast could keep him from that destiny. Even Kandraas seemed amazed that he had survived his encounter with the pack of sturm-wolves. He had been anxious for no reason he decided. Things would fall into place with time. When he eventually reached Talert he was sure Falsnare and the rest of his men would be there waiting for him. They had to be.

He reached for the long twisted staff of wood that Kandraas had supplied for him to use as a crutch and pulled himself to his feet. With several awkward steps he made the short distance to Kan-

draas' crude writing desk and seated himself. Scav had found a way to pass the time while waiting for the old man to finish his daily errands. Kandraas' vast wealth of scrolls and parchments had turned out to be a blessing.

It had been years since Scav had had the time to relax and pursue his joy of reading. During his youth his father had hoped that Scav and his brother Andos would eventually enter politics. He didn't want the warrior's life for his sons. "The fields of battle have consumed too many sons and young men," he had once said to his wife. "Mine will not have to endure such horrors."

Thus, Relnus Sagenthor the famed general and brave warrior sought to spare his own sons from such careers. Scav and his brother were surrounded by the finest teacher-slaves his father could afford. Scav managed to learn enough Old Aldesian to read the classics and had a working knowledge of Haagan, Deep Grevan and Harn. Scav achieved the education that his father had always desired but that had always eluded him. However, with his father's design to save his children from becoming casualties of war he had neglected to teach them the skills of battle and leadership. Scav had no skills in the use of weapons or combat, no knowledge of leading men or rallying them behind one's cause.

When Raventhorpe approached Scav and revealed to him that he was destined to become the next Emperor, a great warrior-king in the tradition of Saratar, Scav thought him to be insane. Raventhorpe was relentless. He summoned Scav one night to the famous temple of Benyar in Soult Tet. There Raventhorpe and the High priest of Benyar sat with Scav and went through the Kaba-troth late into the night. The two old men pointing out the oracles that laid out Scav's destiny. Scav protested. He wasn't a leader, certainly not a warrior! But the old men seemed oblivious to that fact. They explained that Scav would be forged with lessons, hard learned on the field of battle. Tempered with ordeals and trials. And when the time was paramount, he would fulfill his destiny.

Scav yawned, looked through the massive piles of scrolls before him and chose one at random from the middle of a stack. He looked over the crudely inked characters confronting him and winced. This one was hopelessly locked in a language foreign to him. He discarded it and chose another.

Removing the bindings from the scroll and rolling it out before him, he read the title, *The Orders of Magic*. He tried to read a few passages and gave up. The next scroll was entitled, *The Beast Cults of the Sardan'var*.

Scav had found that the overwhelming proportion of works in Kandraas' library dealt with magic, ancient cults and primitive languages. The fact that Kandraas possessed such works was not as puzzling as the fact that he seemed to be quite fluent in reading the vast array of languages they were written in.

Scav was just about to choose another scroll when the door to the small cabin swung open. He turned, shuddering from the cold gush of air that swept through the room.

Kandraas entered and quite to Scav's surprise was followed by another, a large giant of a man. Scav gulped. He knew that this had to be the dralch, Has'Faur; the mysterious mute who had rescued him and brought him to Kandraas for healing.

Kandraas hung his satchel on its peg and after the dralch had entered the cabin, closed the door behind him.

He looked to Scav and smiled, "Ah, here he is as I told you. He's quite active as of late but of course his legs still cannot bear his weight."

The Dralch approached Scav. Scav had to stop himself from moaning in fear. The left side of the Dralch's face was a mass of scarred tissue. The eye socket on that side was empty, a fold of yellow skin, drawn tightly. The left ear was missing and only a few strands of coal black hair hung from his scalp on that side of his face.

Has'Faur stopped a few feet short of Scav and looked down at his injured legs. He made a motion with his hands toward Scav.

Kandraas who was acting very nervous stepped up to Has'Faur's side. "Uh, he want a you to stand up lad."

Puzzled, Scav struggled to his feet. The dralch smiled, but it was the most unfriendly smile Scav had ever seen.

"See?" said Kandraas, pointing to Scav, "Like I told you. He can barely stand. There is still much to do. You can't expect him to travel like this. It's going to take time. Another week perhaps."

The dralch looked at Kandraas and made several very pronounced gestures with his hands.

Kandraas gulped and nodded, "Of course. Of course."

With that, the dralch turned and headed for the door. Kandraas watched in silence and sighed a breath of relief when he had departed.

Scav looked to Kandraas bewildered, "What was that all about?"

Kandraas seated himself and took out his pipe. A trickle of perspiration had broken out on his forehead. "You wouldn't want to know, lad."

"I think I would!" barked Scav. "You're afraid of him aren't you?"

Kandraas lit his pipe and closed his eyes for a brief moment as he drew in the smoke. Finally he looked to Scav, his face expressing deep concern. "Lad, I've grown to like you over these past weeks. I wish ill toward no man, but I rarely risk my neck for others if you know what I mean. I've found out what Has'Faur has planned for you. I've been trying to stall him. I told him you were still unable to walk, and he's just proven me a liar."

"What does he want?" cried Scav.

"There's a large tin mine operating about a day's ride north of here. They use slaves to draw it out. Last spring the withering disease spread through the hills. Most of the slaves at the mine died off. Since then they've been paying a considerable price for anybody that can work. Has'Faur has been making good money selling those he can get his hands on."

"So that's it!" said Scav, "He's waiting for you to restore me and as soon as I can walk he'll drag me to those mines."

"That's the truth of it Lad," said Kandraas. "And I'm sorry for it. He'll be here in the morning to retrieve you."

Scav shook his head, "You're not going to let that happen are you? Surely you're going to help me!"

Kandraas lay down his pipe and looked to Scav for a long moment. "In another time I would have helped you lad. I was once a powerful man. Now? Well, I'm not the same man. A few years ago I would do a spell on Has'Faur that would... Well, that's just not possible now. I've lost the power. If I try to help you, we'd both be dead in a fortnight."

"Look, what I told you before about having friends and money in Talert; it's true. Take me to Talert. Let's leave tonight and I swear you will be well paid."

Kandraas scowled, "You think me a coward; that I would find courage in a handful of gold? We would never reach Talert alive and that's a fact. Has'Faur is the ablest tracker I've ever chanced upon. You think it was an accident, a turn of good fortune that he happened to be there when the sturm-wolves attacked you? He was tracking you lad, from the very start and when he came across your tracks he was determined to capture you and sell you to the mines."

Scav sat in silence. His thoughts raced as he tried to find the solution to his current dilemma. "Well there's only one thing for me to do" he finally said, "I'll have to kill him when he comes for me."

Kandraas laughed, "You? Kill Has'Faur? You ever seen a dralch when he's been angered lad? You listen to me and you'll live to see your friends. You won't like my advice but trust me it's

the best thing to do."

"What's that?" asked Scav.

"You go peaceful with Has'Faur in the morning. You act the dumb, lame servant. When you get to the mines do what you're told. They'll spare you the whip if you give them no grief. Meanwhile I'll get to Talert eventually and tell your friends where to find you. If they have as much gold as you claim, they can easily buy your freedom."

Kandraas was right, he didn't like the plan. "How do I know you'll do it?"

"Well, you don't I suppose. But it's the living who witness the dawning of a new day."

Scav thought on it for several moments. Staring at his legs he knew that he would never be able to outpace Has'Faur. Kandraas was right. For once Scav would decide for himself what was going to happen. He would play the dim-witted servant for a time and when the chance presented itself he would make his escape, with or without the aid of Falsnare or Kandraas.

He took a piece of blank parchment from Kandraas' desk and picked up a stylus. He had many details to put down. "I'm going to give you a note to present to Falsnare when you reach Talert. If the worst happens and Falsnare is not there, I want you to seek out Gandle. He's a shopkeeper who will..."

"Gandle?" interrupted Kandraas. "What does he have to do with this?"

Scav smiled, "So you know him? Gandle's an old friend. He'll be sure to find someone to come to my aid."

Kandraas shook his head. "Claiming Gandle for a friend doesn't speak well of you. I wouldn't entrust my last crust of bread to him."

Scav finished his letter and rolled it up. Handing it to Kandraas he smiled. "I'm grateful old man. If you keep your word in this matter I'll be forever indebted to you."

Kandraas took the letter and secreted it in his robes. "You just watch your back and keep your mouth shut up there. Wait out the winter and come spring you start looking for your friends."

That night Scav tossed and turned in his pallet. A part of him wanted to fight back, ambush Has'Faur and be done with it. But he knew he was no match for the giant. Even if he were in the best condition, he doubted he could best the dralch, let alone now that he had two ailing legs.

Sleep finally came and it was filled with dreams of old friends, wolves and the dralch, of Raventhorpe speaking his wild dreams, his eye s flashing with a confidence that was contagious. Early in the morning Scav was awakened by a heavy pounding at the door. Kandraas stirred and finally got up and pulled on his robes. Looking to Scav who was pale and wide-eyed, he moved toward the door and opened it.

Has'Faur, clad in leather and fur stepped through the door. In one hand he had an iron collar with nearly eight feet of heavy chain attached to it.

"You'll have no need for that Has!" said Kandraas, "I've talked it over with him and he has no mind to cross you. Besides he can't run!"

Scav sat up and pulled on his clothes. He was having serious doubts. The dralch approached him and held out the collar. Scav stared at it for a moment. The dralch grunted in disapproval and shook the collar in his face. Scav hesitantly took the collar and placed it about his neck. Has'Faur fumbled with a lock and placed it on the eyelet of the collar. Gripping the chain firmly in his hands he roughly pulled on it and hoisted Scav from the pallet.

"Easy Has'Faur!" cried Kandraas, "The boy's still ill. If you don't handle him better, he'll never make it to the mines."

The dralch looked at Scav revealing little about what was on his mind. It was a blank face without emotion. Pushing past Kandraas he led Scav to the door. Scav looked back one last time to see Kandraas standing in the doorway. He placed one hand on the pocket of his robe where he had placed the letter and patted it. He gave Scav a

knowing look and nodded.

The dralch, with his prisoner in tow, headed toward the edge of the small grassy clearing where Kandraas' moss-shrouded cabin stood. There, a horse and mule waited tethered to a tanning frame. Has'Faur turned and without warning lifted Scav into the air and set him down firmly on the mule's unsaddled back. He took the length of chain and looped it through the the saddle of his horse, securing it. The horse, quite large by normal standards, sagged under the mighty dralch's weight. With a swift kick to the horse's ribs, they headed down the slopes into a winding, gnarled ravine. Scav looked back one more time but Kandraas had closed the door to the cabin and was not to be seen.

As he was led away into the Galon Hills, Scav was reminded of the stories Nayrod his slave tutor had told him as a child; stories of young children who were disobedient to their parents, and the evil Dralch who would come and steal them away.

The sun was just beginning to sink beyond the hills and the small blue moon Shadis was already midway overhead when Has'Faur and Scav reached the first outer buildings of the mining village. Kandraas had been very correct when he spoke of Has'Faur's superb tracking ability, for throughout the entire day he had led Scav cross country, seldom utilizing the many foot trails they encountered. It struck Scav that Has'Faur was deliberately being elusive. At one point, when they came to a trail that was obviously well traveled, Has'Faur had paused for several minutes, listening intently and scanning up and down the trail before deciding to move on.

Scav's legs were raw with scratches and scrapes from the countless briar patches and thorn groves they had virtually forced their way through. He was greatly relieved to see the settlement, even though he knew what it would mean for him.

The village, comprised of a dozen buildings of rough-hewn timber, was huddled in the draw of a large rocky ridge. In the face of a vertical rise, three separate mine entrances led into darkness. One of the mines appeared to have collapsed and showed signs of disuse. The other two had well beaten paths leading to them and a variety of picks, spades and shovels were littered in a careless fashion about their entrances.

Has'Faur led them up a muddy track toward the largest of the buildings. Three men were busy at work skinning a large buck outside of the building and they paused from their task as the dralch and Scav approached.

The building appeared to be the meeting hall of the village. It was nearly twenty feet in height and the wall facing them was adorned with the antlers, hooves and skulls of a myriad of animals. The lower part of the building was an open-air structure. Inside, a half dozen tables and chairs were arranged in a large circle about a great stone fire pit. Over the fire was a large spit with several rabbits impaled, dripping with grease. Scav wet his lips. He wondered if slaves were well fed here.

One of the men approaching them smiled broadly. "You've some nerve coming back here dralch!" He laughed and shook his head, "Those girls you sold to Averan took a fever no more than a week after you left. Both of them died. Averan's been honing his blade ever since."

The man eyed Scav for a moment, "He's a might frail for the mines. Don't see where he was worth the trip dralch. Well, might as well bring him and let Averan have a look."

Has'Faur dismounted his horse and pulled Scav off the mule. He landed in the mud on his shoulder. Grunting, he struggled to his feet almost tripping over the chain secured to his collar.

Has'Faur led him into the building dragging him as he struggled to walk on his stiff legs. The dralch seated himself at one of the tables. Scav started to take a seat also and was greeted with a resounding slap across the face from Has'Faur. The dralch cast him a cold glare from

his one eye. Scav wiped the trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth and decided to remain standing.

After several moments a greasy man cloaked in several layers of fur and leather emerged from a staircase behind them. He walked up to the table, eyeing Scav and looking him over. He smiled with amusement.

He sat down across from Has'Faur and leaned back in his chair. "Dralch! I've been thinking about you a lot these past months. Swore I'd cut yer head off and hang it on my wall out there if ya showed up. You crossed me and nobody does that to Averan."

He pulled a large bronze dagger from his belt and began to whittle at the edge of the table. "Everybody warned me. 'Don't deal with dralch' they says. But I'm like the stubborn ass, just too kind. I says to myself, 'The dralch is an honest fellow. He needs the money and he be plenty grateful to Averan. We help one another.' Yes, that's what I said to myself. But what do you do?"

He pointed to Has'Faur with the dagger, "You cheat me my friend. I tell you I'm lonely up here. 'Bring me women,' I beg. But you bring me girls, take my gold and then they die. I think, 'He didn't know. The dralch wouldn't cheat his good friend." But you don't come back as promised. I wait. I think 'he'll be back any day.' Many weeks I don't see you. Now I think 'He spend my gold maybe, have good laugh at Averan'. Now I'm angry. Then I hear, that the dralch is back. And I think, 'See? he has brought me new girls to make good.' Now I find you bring me this.."

He pointed to Scav, "He cannot walk so good. He can't move stone or swing the pick."

Has'Faur began to gesture with his hands and Averan waved him off. "Stop that nonsense. I tell you before I don't understand it. You just listen to Averan real good. You give me the boy, the mule and horse and I think we stay friends."

Has'Faur shook his head furiously. He stood to his feet and took hold of the chain on Scav's neck. He was about to head out of the building when he noticed that eight or nine men had gathered between him and his mounts.

"Now, now, dralch." said Averan calmly, "You use that slow-thinking head of yers. Leave the boy and the animals. You'll get sore feet out of this and nothing worse. Then we do business again as before. But if you cross me again, I'll have your head on that wall."

Has'Faur tensed and Scav was sure that he the dralch was about to leap into battle at any second. Then for the first time Scav noticed that the dralch carried no weapon. It now seemed quite odd that he would not have a blade or even a cudgel. After several tense moments the dralch dropped the chain.

"Excellent! See? What did I tell you my friends? The dralch is a good fellow. He has come to make good. He doesn't want that there should be bad blood among us. Here my friend, sit and finish your rabbit. I will draw you some mead and we'll have a good laugh."

Averan looked to Scav and a disgusted look formed on his face. "Gurva! Take this lame pup to the kitchen. Maybe Jyrdan can find use for him."

One of the men came forward and took Scav's chain. Leading him away he chuckled, "Yeah, Jyrdan will find use for you. Maybe he stew you up with pork and venison."

Scav remembered Kandraas' advice. He would keep his mouth shut and do as he was told. As Emperor he would dispatch the Varnen Caras to sweep the Galon hills and eradicate the whole filthy lot of them.

The man led Scav to a small building behind the Meeting-Hall. He opened the door and shoved Scav inside. Scav found himself in a large kitchen. One wall was made of brick with three fireplaces cluttered with a variety of iron pots and skillets. The center of the room was divided with a long oaken table which spanned ten feet. At one end of the table a large fat man sat on a stool with a

keg of rum before him.

"Whattaya want!" he growled.

The man dropped the chain at Scav's feet. "Averan's sent ya a present. Ask me, he'd make a better meat pie than a cook!" He chuckled and departed.

Scav stood in silence. The fat man was now smiling and nodding his head. "So! You've come to help old Jyrdan in the kitchen eh?" He took a drink from the jug and wiped his mouth on his sleeve. "Come 'ere!"

Scav hobbled around the table and approached him. Jyrdan looked him up and down and shook his head. "Well, I can see why they give you to ol' Jyrdan! You listen good to me. I don't like to talk much, so I'm telling you once. After this, you foul up and I take the stick to your hide. I got a mean temper that knows no pity. You get the hair on my back up and I'm likely to break skin and bones puttin' you down."

Scav nodded. His left knee began to tremble. "uh...yes...sir."

The fat man cast him a hard stare. "Now if you want to keep the peace around here, you mind yourself. No talking unless you're asked a question or the kitchen's on fire. See that mark on the wall?" He pointed to a black line etched into the brick.

"Yes sir." replied Scav.

"You'll keep a supply of firewood in the kitchen, stacked to that mark at all times. Understand? Half crippled or not, I expect you to do this."

Scav nodded.

"And you'll keep the water barrel filled to the rim. If I find it below the first hoop it's the stick for you."

Scav nodded again. The fat man put the wooden stopper back into the keg of rum and pushed it aside. "You'll be in charge of the kitchen here. Cookin', skinnin' and helpin' out in the hall when the men come up for their evenin' meal. He stood up and stretched.

"Now I'm going to see Averan for a bit. When I come back, you show me how good a listener you are."

Scav nodded. "Yes sir. You won't have any problems with me sir."

Jyrdan shook his head. "I ain't never met a slave who hasn't caused me problems. You trust me you'll get a taste of the stick before the day's over. By the way what's your name?"

"Scranton sir." replied Scav.

"Hmmmfff, gotta fancy name eh? Well mister fancy-name, you're a slave you see. You rest assured that the kitchen is the best place to be up here. You foul things up and you'll be put in the mines. And you wouldn't last a week down there. Averan doesn't fancy puttin' out his gold for those who can't work. You can't work, you don't eat!"

He walked through the door and left Scav alone in the building. Scav thought for several moments. He walked over to the water barrel and looked inside. It was near empty. The pile of firewood was about three feet short of the mark. He scanned the room. He didn't see an axe, but there was a bucket. He rolled up the chain he was dragging from his neck and coiled it around his arm. Picking up the bucket, he stepped outside. His legs burned with pain and his knees threatened to give out with each step.

At the edge of the village a small bubbling stream tumbled down over the rocks and into a pool where a small dam of earth and stone had been constructed. He headed down a muddy track toward the stream.

It took about a dozen trips for him to retrieve enough water to reach the rim of the barrel. The pain screamed to his brain and several times he lost his balance and found himself sprawled out in the mud. During his many trips, Scav studied the village and its layout. Only 200 feet away from the kitchens was a fenced-in area containing six horses. He hadn't counted on the possibility of stealing a mount. If he could manage to get a horse he could make his escape at anytime.

He found that his senses were heightened and that he was aware of everything. The more he learned about his surroundings the more confident he became that he could make an escape using the cover of darkness.

After satisfying himself that the water barrel was full, he sat down on a wooden stool and began to ponder his escape. He couldn't put his trust in Kandraas. The old man had nothing to gain by rescuing him. No, he would assume help was not coming and take his chances. While deep in thought, a faint, grating noise interrupted him. Scav glanced over to the corner of the room and noticed a large rat tearing at the corner of a sack of flour.

At that moment Jyrdan returned and closed the door. Scav, caught by surprise, scrambled to his feet, knocking the stool to the floor.

"You enjoy sittin' on yer ass don't ya!" growled the fat man.

He picked up a cup and threw it at the rat, which scampered quickly behind a clutter of boxes. "Sittin' on yer ass while I'm being robbed!"

He walked over to Scav and grabbed him by the iron collar "Well, I'll tell you something else lad! You get one meal a day here! One! And brother rat over there just ate your meal for today. I suggest you guard tomorrow's meal."

He released Scav and walked over to the water barrel inspecting its contents. He showed no reaction. He looked over to the fire-wood and shook his head. "I guess your deaf, is that it lad?"

Scav shook his head, "er..no sir."

"I guess you decided we didn't need any firewood."

"I couldn't find the axe sir. As soon as you returned I was..."

"Shut yer mouth!" he interrupted, "There's other's who do the cuttin' The firewood is stacked to the side of the meeting-hall. I'm not asking you to blister your hands with an axe, just to carry it and stack it here! Understand!"

Scav nodded quickly.

"I'll spare you the stick this time. You're a might shallower in the head than I thought."

Scav sighed with relief.

"Now I got an errand for you." He walked over to table and picked up a wicker basket. He placed two large loaves of dark bread in it along with a large net of blood sausage.

"You take this to Averan over at the meeting-hall. And tell Gurva I want a keg of rum. You be quick about it."

Scav grabbed the basket and limped toward the door.

"And listen here Scranton!" Jyrdan yelled after him, "That keg comes back here light and I'll break yer arms."

Scav stepped into the cool evening air. It was fully dark now. From the hall he could see two dozen men about the fire pit; a great chorus of song and laughter filled the night air. Scav was sure he could make his escape with little trouble. He turned without hesitation and headed for the horses. He was committed now. Being caught would surely earn him a beating and a place in the mines. This would be his only chance.

The pale light from Shadis shining overhead created long shadows across the village and Scav did his best to stay in them.

With bated breath he finally reached the fence and knelt down to slip beneath the wooden rails. The chain he had been carrying slipped and made a sound that to Scav was like thunder. He dropped to the other side of the fence and peered back toward the hall. There were no startled yells or alarmed looks. He sighed in relief and pulled himself to his feet.

The horses were all congregated about a large pile of straw. Scav approached them slowly. He had just selected one that suited his needs and was about to take it by the mane when a powerful set of hands grabbed his neck from behind.

He dropped the basket and struggled violently, finding himself raised off the ground, his feet flailing in the air. He was about to shout out

when a hand clamped down over his mouth. Resigning himself to capture he stopped his struggles hoping that a thorough beating was not about to be administered.

His strange captor set him down and spun him around. Scav strained in the darkness to see his assailant. He gasped, "Has'Faur?"

The dralch towering over Scav, reached out his hand and fumbled with the lock on Scav's collar. After a few seconds he removed the collar and dropped it to the ground.

Scav dared not move. He was sure the dralch was about to kill him. Instead the dralch turned and Scav saw that he had a great length of rope coiled over one shoulder.

Completely ignoring Scav he secured each horse in turn to his rope. When he reached the last horse he looked toward Scav. Scav could feel the dralch's one good eye staring at him through the darkness. There was a short pause before he turned from the last horse and led his string of horses toward the gate of the pen. Scav was disbelieving. The dralch was up to something he was sure of it.

He unfastened the gate and as Scav watched, led the horses away from the village and disappeared into the dark. Scav stood for several moments trying to catch his breath. Picking up the basket of bread and sausage he darted for the horse. The horse, spooked by Scav's sudden approach, reared up on its hind legs, bellowing a warning. He backed off and tried to calm the animal.

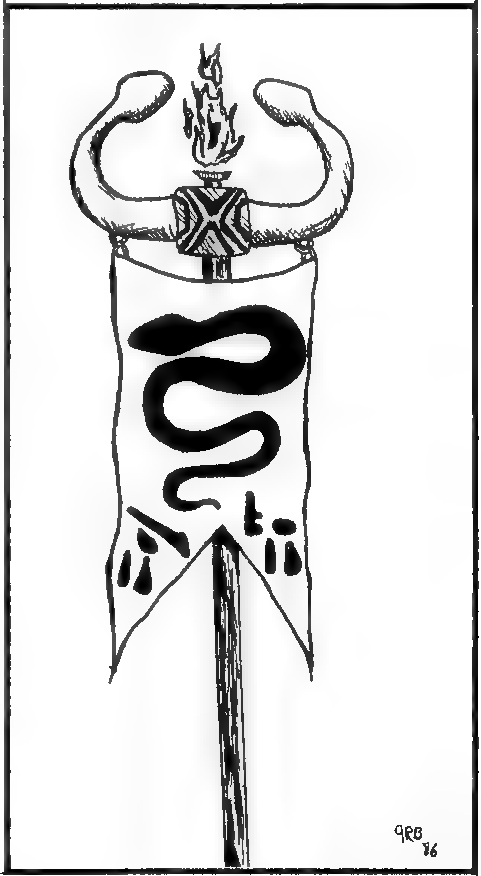
"Easy Boy!" he said in a hushed voice.

The horse finally calmed and Scav with enormous difficulty mounted him. Gently nudging his mount in the ribs he rode out of the pen. Turning in the opposite direction from that which the dralch had taken, Scav rode away at a gentle gallop.

As he left the confines of the village and reached the open hills his heart seemed to be beating to the rhythm of the horse's hooves striking the ground. He wasn't sure what had just happened. Has'Faur had turned him loose. Why? As an act of revenge against Averan? He would never know.

After riding a short distance from the village and feeling quite confident that he had escaped, Scav kicked the horse in the ribs and rode at a hard gallop toward the east. He had an appointment to keep in Talert.

Next Issue: Blood and Ale



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Face Off!

•RESURRECTION!•

Essential to Heroic Role-playing
or
a Cop-out for Wimps?

In this corner, defending the rights of gamers everywhere in support of Resurrection;
Lew Herring
and
Joel Bozell

Jolly and Frank, you ignorant slugs!

Resurrection in AD&D is as important to playing and enjoying the game as swords, magic, and a good snack like pizza or nachos. Even remotely considering eliminating resurrection from AD&D is similar to the type of thinking that brought us the Edsel and "New Coke." You just don't fix what ain't broke. If resurrection did not have a place in the game, TSR would have left it out of the 2nd edition rules.

Of course resurrection does have a place in AD&D and that is to provide the players with the maximum amount of fun. Having a beloved character killed is no fun. Having that same character resurrected to live and fight another day is. We have all lived with the despair of seeing a high-level character slain in combat and then while your comrades are off seeking fame and fortune, you are

In this corner, attacking the very foundations of popular role-playing;
Frank R. VanHoose
and
Jolly R. Blackburn

That's right we're taking a stand against resurrection in fantasy role-playing.

Telling fellow gamers that you are taking such a position is sort of like telling the National Rifle Association you're against guns. The reactions are likely to be the same; Violent!

So before we submit to having our heads lobbed off, let us both state that we are not TOTALLY against resurrection in FRPGs. We simply feel that resurrection is one facet of role playing that has been greatly abused. While we adamantly defend the right of all players to play the style of role-playing that suits their needs and tastes, we feel that resurrection warrants some serious reconsideration.

Resurrection, in our opinion promotes many problems and creates many others. Namely, it encourages an atmosphere for shoddy and inferior styles of role-playing. Death, or the fear of

In Favor Of : Continued

rolling up a new first-level character. Resurrection keeps your adventuring party intact and lets the good times continue to roll.

A well-crafted AD&D adventure should unfold like a movie: damsel enters, villain enters, villain kidnaps damsel, hero enters, hero fights and defeats villain, hero rescues damsel. Can you just imagine Conan saying this, "Oh no! I've only got one hit point left. I can't rescue you fair princess, for I must run and hide." Exciting, heroic adventure isn't it? Of course not. While playing AD&D, you should be the hero marching boldly in to confront the evil wizard and rescue the princess. If you should be slain, your companions can drag you out of the battle and after visiting a sympathetic priest you can return to face down your foe. Whereupon returning the princess to her father, the king, you will be rewarded handsomely, and probably knighted. Isn't that the way a game should be, Heroic?

Those unenlightened souls who disapprove of resurrection would have you believe a character does not have to be played intelligently or cautiously, because they can be resurrected. Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! By allowing resurrection, a DM can design tougher adventures to test the players, thereby pushing them to be more creative and to play more intelligently. Resurrection also protects players from being punished by an overzealous DM who accidently kills off a few characters.

Of course, our opponents will probably point out in thier arguement that resurrection makes AD&D too easy; that there is no challenge for a player who can have a character resurrected.

Yeah, right! Simply looking at the AD&D 2nd edition rules should convince any rational thinking person, the rules on resurrection are tough enough already. Consider what must take place for a successful resurrection:

Opposed : Continued

death, the greatest motivating factor known to mortals, is no longer a threat or even something to contend with. Death has been reduced to a financial inconvenience, a calculated risk.

Many players and DMs will protest and scream, "But it's a fantasy game! What's the big deal?"

We get a little tired of hearing that argument. The assumption seems to be that categorizing a role-playing game under the umbrella of 'fantasy' immediately destroys any attempts to attack the game on the basis of realism. Expand your mind a little on this concept, the two terms are not contradictory. Characters raised and living in a fantasy milieu live in a realistic world, at least from their own point of view. Dragons and elves are a reality and magic is fact. On the other hand the internal-combustion engine would be fantasy. It's all in the eyes of the beholder, or in this case in the mind of the believer.

So what's wrong with resurrection in a fantasy milieu? Resurrection goes far beyond elves, hobbits and magic in stretching the fabric of believability. For our first witness, we call upon the works of popular fantasy-fiction. After all, fantasy role-playing was directly inspired by and attempts to emulate such literature so let's look to them for some answers.

So look through those fantasy novels in your library. Now, find one in which the hero of the book has been resurrected one or more times? Don't bother to make a list, chances are you couldn't think of any. There's a reason for it. Who would read a Conan novel if at the end of every epic the hero was resurrected. What kind of hero is that?

And since most role-playing scenarios run like movies or episodic television how many of your favorite movies would hold the same interest if resurrection reared its ugly head. "Wait, a minute

In Favor Of : Continued

1. A priest of at least 14th level with an 18 or greater wisdom must be found.

2. The priest must be of the same alignment as the dead.

3. A payment in the range of 50,000 gold pieces and an exceptional service must be done for the priest.

4. Upon casting the spell, the priest will age three years. Finding a priest who will sacrifice three years of their life, even for 50,000 in gold will be nearly impossible.

5. Finally, the character must make a resurrection survival roll. Characters with average constitutions fail this roll one out of five times.

If anything, resurrection should be easier to attain, not more difficult.

How many times have you heard a DM say, "I don't allow resurrection, it's not realistic." To that we can only say, "THIS IS FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE REALISTIC!"

If I can call down an ice storm on a huge fire breathing red dragon, I sure as heck can be brought back from the dead.

Frank and Jolly, stop being so grim about resurrection. AD&D is a game, it's okay to have fun. □

Opposed: Continued

I'm not quite dead! It was just a flesh wound " Fine for a Monty Python movie but hardly heroic-fantasy.

Another argument that is frequently thrown at us, "Resurrection promotes longevity in a campaign. If all the characters croak, than the campaign falls apart and players lose interest. What fun is it to play a character for months only to have him killed by an incompetent DM!"

Such arguments just don't wash. If the DM is incompetent or a 'killer' DM why are you playing with him. He can't DM unless he has willing players who submit to such abuse. What god dictated that character-death and campaign longevity/enjoyment cannot coexist? This argument is totally blown out of the water because there are a host of successful RPGs that do not have resurrection provisions in their rules. We've run extensive campaigns in AD&D, Call of Cthulhu, RuneQuest, Traveler, Paranoia, BootHill, Gang-Busters, Top Secret, James Bond, Star Trek and many others over the years.

Most of these games do not have resurrection. When your character dies it's 'tough cookies'. You pull yourself up by the bootstraps and roll another character. You don't whine or throw a book at the DM in disgust. What's the big deal? You learn from your mistakes and try again. Blank character sheets come cheap.

Anyway, in all of these games we've managed to run extended campaigns, as long as, or longer than the typical AD&D campaign. Players had as much fun playing these games as AD&D and most importantly characters died forever and the campaign continued.

Based on the sales figures of the games mentioned above, other Game Masters are having no problems finding and keeping players. This clearly demonstrates that a fantasy role-playing campaign can survive the absence of resurrec

Opposed: Continued

tion provisions without being detrimental to campaign longevity or player enjoyment.

So what's resurrection doing in AD&D? Next time you pop a quarter into a video game machine at the arcade take a look at the lower left-hand corner of the screen. That's where you find the little icons depicting the number of lives you have left. Now look at your character sheet under constitution. That's how many times your character can be resurrected. Of course, there is a very SMALL chance he may fail his systems shock roll, that's if your DM even bothers to enforce that rule. But, for the most part, constitution equals five lives for a quarter. What other explanation is there? There are no such models in popular fantasy upon which such a system is based. In other words resurrection is a game device inserted in the rules to fix a problem.

But let's remember that we are all pioneers in Role-playing games. It's an ever changing process, we move ahead, discarding what doesn't work in favor of systems that do. Thus you can expect a 3rd edition of AD&D, a 4th and so on in the coming years.

To turn a blind eye toward such problems and refuse to consider alternatives is simply a refusal to give up an obvious advantage and detremental to the wheels of progress.

Ok, so you're still not convinced? We mentioned that resurrection promotes inferior role-playing. Let's illustrate that point.

Let's look at the all-too-familiar cycle of many campaigns.

Drak the fighter assembles a party of like-minded comrades at a local pub.

The plan? Put an end to that nasty dragon and his monthly crop-burning escapades. Besides there is much gold to be had. So after a few drinks to bolster the spirits and put off the cold damp air, the party equips themselves and heads off to the Dragon's Lair.

But things go badly for the group. They manage to defeat the dragon but three loyal comrades were killed in the process. As previously agreed the survivors retrieve the fallen heroe's bodies and take them back to town. They split the treasure and set aside a special fund to pay for the expensive rites of resurrection. Quaffing a few more drinks, the party then carries their comrades to the elderly cleric who lives on the edge of town. Morth, the high-level priest smiles as he watches the troop approach. He counts the bodies and calculates the profits. "Excellent!" he thinks to himself, "We can add that new room to the temple after all."

After a few quick spells, the ragged group pays the Cleric a mountain of gold and departs. One of the newly-revived deadmen asks his friend, "How much was my share of the gold?"

This cycle is likely to repeat itself numerous times in a typical campaign until the players grow weary of the process or their characters finally fail system-shock checks. This is high-adventure? This is the legacy of heroes??

Look at the effect resurrection has had on the above scenario.

The characters are not afraid of death. They have an insurance policy of sorts (Mutual of Odin?). A group fund that guarantees there will be money in the pot to pay for their resurrections. Remove the possibility of resurrection from this campaign and I guarantee the problem would have been approached with a little more consideration and suspense.

For us resurrection is nothing more than an attempt to put a bandaid on a serious problem in AD&D mechanics. It's been pointed out countless times before. It's the combat system. In AD&D as the character advances in levels so do his hit points. Hit points we are told are representative of a character's physical endurance, his ability to sustain blows and his experience at dodging blows, thus

Opposed: Continued

lessening the damage.

So Ox the fighter with 60 hit points of damage engages in battle. Slowly he is whittled down. Slash, Parry, Slash, Parry.

Ox is doing fine. He takes massive damage but it doesn't show from the way he keeps fighting. Suddenly he reaches 0 hit points, grabs his chest and drops dead. Here lies the problem. When was the last time you saw two boxers fight sixteen rounds totally unaffected by the rigors of fighting. Suddenly one boxer who hasn't so much as sweat one drop of perspiration drops like a rock. AD&D glazes over fatigue, exhaustion, pain etc (The 2nd Edition rules have tried to address this problem). Fight till you drop is the catch phrase.

Under such a combat system players literally fight to the death. Enter resurrection to balance things out. Ok, it helps, but is it worth it with all the new problems it creates?

We say NO! There are simpler ways. James Bond the RPG and Top Secret have excellent solutions in Hero or Luck points. Your character is fighting a huge climactic battle. You've been building up to this moment for months and you are winning. Suddenly a freak blow rips the life out your character. Nobody likes to see a character die in that manner. Simply allow the character to expend his hero points, which allow him to avoid the outcome of one situation. In this case, he changes the result of the critical die roll that would have killed him. Nothing wrong with this system. Play is unbroken and the fight goes on. When the characters 'Luck' runs out then so be it.

The point is, any clever DM can come up with a horde of simple rules to make up for the lack of resurrection in his campaign. Don't be afraid to depart from the flock when you detect some aspect of the rules that bother you. The final say is the DMs.

So what is our major gripe concerning resurrection? It's the atmosphere it creates in a campaign, which is a lack of suspense, a complacency. Although our opponents will argue that resurrection enables players to behave more like heroes, it has the opposite effect. It makes them wimps. Heroes are those who are not afraid to die and willing to face death to achieve their aims. If death is little more than an inconvenience, what kind of heroes are we talking about? In the video game hobby, programs that are designed to allow a player to avoid death situations in an arcade game are called 'CHEATS'. Simply push a button and your video counterpart bounces back to life and you continue to play. Sure you rack up 10,000 points in Ikari Warriors but what's the point? Where's the accomplishment, that feeling of satisfaction, knowing that you did it on your own merit and know-how?

Webster's Dictionary defines a hero as, *"A man noted for courageous acts or nobility of purpose, especially one who has risked or sacrificed his life."*

So our question is; How can you have a hero without the risk of death? And please don't tell us that death is still possible because of the system-shock checks. "Maybe I really died. Maybe I didn't." At worst that's a very diluted and watered-down version of death, hardly the stuff heroes are made of.

In any epic-adventure there are losses. There are comrades who no longer run with the pack. Enemies die, friends die. It's death or the threat of death that make the adventure more meaningful for the survivors. When one of our favorite characters bites the big one, we accept it as part of that character's legacy. He fought the good fight! He'll probably be sung about in the barda' songs for generations.

Ask most players about their favorite all-time character and chances are it will be a dead character. Remember, the only real heroes are dead heroes. □

NEWS FROM AFAR

NEW PRODUCTS, RUMOURS, ...

• *NEW PRODUCTS* •

Mayfair:

CHILL, a horror role-playing game, has been revised by Mayfair Games, from the previously published, award-winning game of the same name by Pacesetter. As Mayfair's first-ever hard-bound book, *CHILL's* rules are cleaner and more concise than the original. Mayfair has kept the basic *CHILL*

system, so those who have played it before can play it again using their original characters. Suggested retail price: $27.00

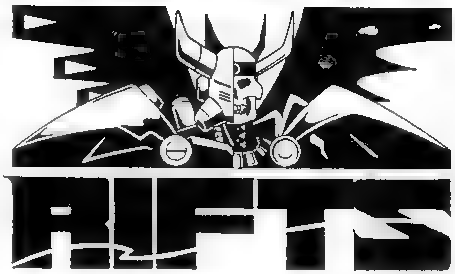
Mayfair has also announced the upcoming release of *EuroRails* the sequel to the classic board game *Empire Builder*.

Palladium Books:

'Turtles Go Hollywood' a new adventure for TMNT is now available. This adventure brings some of the 'grit' of the original comic back to the Turtles. Some new villains are introduced as well as new source material for the Turtle Milieu. Written by award-winning writer Daniel Greenberg. Suggested Retail price: $7.95

Palladium has announced also that *Ninjas & Superspies* is out of stock and will not be available till sometime this summer. The original book is being revised to fall in line with the rule systems of the other Palladium RPGs.

Palladium has announced that they will release new information about their mysterious new project, *RIFTS* at the



Marcon XXV. *RIFTS* is rumored to be a game that presents a completely original game world comprised of cybernetic mechs, dimensional sorcery, and a post-apocalyptic setting. A full unveiling is scheduled for Gen Con '90. Kind of makes you wonder what all the secrecy is about. No information on price or components has been released.

Scheduled to be released in July is *Nostrodom: Agents Against Darkness*. A supplemental source book for Palladium's Megaverse. Players are given the chance to portray aspiring global saviors who are trained in Field Dynamics, Investigation, Infiltration, and Combat against evil creatures and their human masters. The world is in chaos and dark forces are attempting to bring about the apocalypse foretold by Nostradamus, the destruction of the world in the year 2000.

Palladium fans will be pleased that president, Kevin Siembieda has announced that the first quarter of 1990 was the biggest one in the company's history.

• *Notice* •

Several observant readers have noticed that certain companies appear frequently in News from Afar and other major companies never appear. SHADIS contacted every game company in the business for press releases and announcements. Those who respond are presented in News from Afar. SHADIS is not aligned with, or affiliated with any game company. This column is open to any company for announcements, regardless of that company's size or clout.

The Hungry Undead!

"Angry, because they cannot die!
Furious, because they cannot live!"

Shadis Module M1
By Jolly R. Blackburn

Introduction:

The Hungry Undead is an adventure designed as a short encounter to be inserted into a larger campaign. It has been designed for use with the ***AD&D*** system but with minor work can be adapted to any system. The adventure has been placed in the milieu of Alderac and its location can be found on the map in issue no.#1 (Galon Hills), but it can be easily transplanted to any world with little or no modification other than place names.

***Note: My methods of module design are slightly unorthodox. You will find no recommendations for party size or level.** The players will have to make the determination of whether they've gotten in over their heads. A hasty retreat at the appropriate time should prevent any mass slaughter if the players find themselves outmatched. Also as DM you can quickly modify the scenario in accordance with the party's level. For example, the Sturm-wolves encounter alone might prove to be too great and can be removed entirely for smaller and lower-level parties. However, don't shy away from running the adventure as is. Not all dungeons and problems can be cleared out with brute force. There's nothing wrong with players learning to flee in the appropriate situations and living to fight another day.

In this adventure the characters stumble upon a dying man who appears to be quite insane. His wild accounts of a great tomb laden with treasures and vampires should pique their interest enough to warrant further investigation.

The Story of Sleeping Bear Rock

Sleeping Bear Rock is located deep in the desolate country of the Galon Hills. A large column of rock rising 300 feet up from a valley floor, it is all that remains of an ancient volcano. (Very similar to, but much smaller than Devil's Tower of Wyoming.)

There are various stories on how the Rock derived its name. Some claim that from a distance the rock resembles a large sleeping bear. Others claim that the numerous caves of the rock were once a haven for hibernating bears during the severe winters of the area.

Sleeping Bear Rock is composed of volcanic rock and riddled with caves and fissures, the site has been utilized as a burial place for thousands of years. Over a thousand years ago a Haagan Tribe (or any appropriate barbarian tribe from your campaign) brought the area under their control and utilized the Rock to bury their War-chiefs and holy men. The Haagans were the first to tunnel out the Rock and construct various burial vaults and shrines within.

Eventually, a powerful beast-cult within the tribe chose the tombs as their place of worship and for the exclusive burial of their own dead. This cult was the Sardan'var.

The Sardan'var cult rose up around several charismatic priest-warlords who were obsessed with immortality. The cult members were eventually ousted from the Haagan tribes out of fear. The Sardan'var worshipped a strange god, associated with dark magic and human sacrifice. Immortality was sought through this magic and through a special form of vampirism. The dark priests of Sardan'var created a new breed of vampires. The high priest or warlord was transformed into a vampire and served as a warrior-priest presiding over the cult members living within the tombs. At night they led their warriors on raids against surrounding tribes in the valley who they now considered their enemies. The purpose of these raids was to obtain captives for use as food and also to provide sacrifices for the nightly rituals worshipping Sardan'var. The vampire warlords ruled for generations and even now their names are spoken in hushed voices.

As time passed, the warlords of the cult became insane and maniacal. Jealous of each other, the elite of the cult began to assassinate one anoth-

er. Finally, one warlord rose out of the chaos as supreme leader, Lord Kraatan.

For hundreds of years the Sardan'var, led by Lord Kraatan terrorized the area. During this time, they expanded the tombs and conducted their worship in its great temples.

In -375 TR an earthquake caused a wall of rock to dam the Tingress River and flood the valley. The rock became an island and its tombs became inaccessible. The Sardan'var vampires became trapped within the rock and their immortality became a curse. For years they starved and ranted within their prison.

The dam withheld for over 150 years, during which the cult members retreated to their tombs and resorted to a form of hibernation to ease their pangs of hunger.

Finally a season of unusually high rainfall managed to eat away at the dam and the lake drained. The years of sediments caused the entrances to the Tomb to be buried beneath 20 feet of mud. Local tribes of Haagan-speaking peoples inherited legends of the evil site from their fathers and its dark history caused many to shun it.

When one clan attempted to locate the entrance in order to find great treasure, a plague swept the area and the two events were thought to be interconnected. The Rock became an omen of evil for the people and the area was avoided.

Starting Out:

While moving along a seldom-used trail in a remote area, the party stumbles upon a campsite.

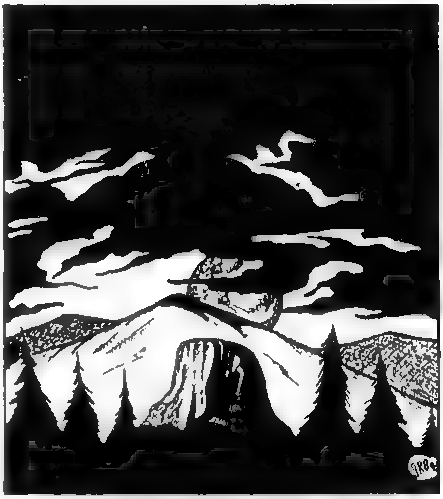
Around a dead fire lies three corpses. They appear to have been dead for several days. If the party examines the bodies they will find that they have a variety of wounds which have been dressed. While the players are examining the bodies, Jorvan Ekrad will charge from the bushes swinging a broken lance at the nearest player. Check for Surprise.

"Defilers! Infidels!"

From the edge of the clearing a half-naked man bursts from the bushes swinging a broken lance.

Jorvan Ekrad: AL: NG; MV 9"; AC 10; C2; hp 2; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3, XPV 20

Jorvan will be quickly defeated, having already been seriously wounded and weak from loss of blood. He should collapse with the first substantial blow and remain conscious just long enough to relate his tale. Jorvan will be delirious and will not respond to questions. The substance of his rambling will go as follows;



"Yurtain? Drake? You're alive! I knew you would be...we found it my brothers! It exists and we found it...great treasures, and the temple! It is beautiful! To think of all the thousands who were laid to rest there! Mustn't go there though...mustn't anger Sardan'var. We were wrong to go there and we were punished. No one else must follow. Destroy the map Yurtain and put the Sleeping Bear out of your mind."

Jorvan will die at this point leaving the players with many questions. If the players search Jorvan they will find a map, soiled with blood. Upon examining the map it should be clear that the tomb is a scant 10 miles off the main trail to the northwest.

I. Arrival at Sleeping Bear Rock

"As you clear the forest's edge you emerge into a small valley. Rising dramatically from the valley floor nearly 300 feet is a large shaft of red rock."

The players will be approaching the Rock from the east side. There will be no apparent trails or tracks leading them to the entrance and they will have to ride around the perimeter of the Rock until they reach location #1.

1. ENTRANCE (20' Diameter)

"You come to an area approximately 20 feet in diameter that has been cleared away. You see the stumps of numerous trees and saplings and several brush piles at the clearing's edge. There is the remains of a campfire in the center of the area. Leaning against the Rock face you see three shovels and a pick. Nearby, a large pit descends into the ground flush with the Rock face"

The clearing was made by Jorvan and his friends. They located the entrance and spent several days digging the pit to the main entrance.

If one of the players thinks to search the immediate area they will find the remains of at least two horses, scattered about the area.

The pit itself is five feet in diameter and descends 20 feet. A crudely made wooden ladder makes descent no problem, though the characters will wonder about its reliability.

At the bottom of the pit, it opens up to an area roughly 20 feet by 10 feet and gives full access to the double doors leading into the tomb.

The doors are not locked and have been blocked partially open with a large rock. (One player can squeeze through at a time.)

The doors are made of bronze and covered with raised letters of Haagan text. (Pick appropriate language for your campaign).

The text reads;

"Here lies the brethren of the Order. Great masters who await the folding of the stars. A curse upon those who would defile their remains or remove the smallest grain of sand from within these halls. May Sardan'var strike out your eyes and break your minds! Go from here, if you would desecrate those who lie here! Flee from here if you would rob the dead. For Sardan'var stands watch over these faithful."

*NOTE- If the characters have traveled by horse, there is a 40% chance that the Sturm-wolves living in Area 15 will pick up the scent and attack the horses. (check once per hour) Once the wolves have attacked the horses they will automatically kill them all, unless a guard or some sort of magical protection is present. If the players are in the pit or in area 2, there is a 60% chance they will hear the attack.

2. OUTER SANCTUARY (20'x30')

"You stand in a large room with smooth walls. The floor is covered with a thick mire of mud and debris. The room is empty. The walls are carved with reliefs of various scenes. On the north end of the room are a set of double doors made of bronze."

This room was known as the Outer Sanctuary. Here Worshippers prepared themselves through rituals of cleansing before entering the temple (Area 4).

The scenes on the wall tell of the great deeds performed by various heroes of the Sardan'var cult.

If the players examine the reliefs they will find that they depict human sacrifice and battle scenes. One particularly gruesome scene shows a priest stacking the skulls of his enemy before an altar.

If a player successfully searches for secret doors, one will be found in the southeast corner of the room leading to area 3.

3. Primitive Burial Chamber (30'x20')

The corridor leading here is a roughly-hewn passageway three feet wide and four feet high.

"The passageway opens up to a large natural cavern. The west end of the cavern has been expanded and squared off. The floor of the room is carpeted with piles of bones. Each pile of bones appears to be a complete human skeleton with the bones neatly arranged like cord wood with the skull resting on top. The walls are damp and blanketed with a thick covering of moss."

This is one of the first burial chambers of Sleeping Bear Rock prior to the cult taking it over. Many of the skeletons here were removed from other chambers in the tombs and placed here in order for the cult to make room for their own dead.

If the players make an extensive search of the room (at least twenty minutes) they will find a short sword among one of the bone piles. (Non-magical but 5 times normal gp value due to its remarkable craftsmanship.)

4. Temple of Sardan'var (Irregular)

This is the primary temple and area of worship. The walls are lined with statues representing various heroes of the faith.

"You find yourself in a large room with a high-arched ceiling. The walls have been daubed white and the floor covered with finely-dressed stone. The north, east and southern walls are lined with statues all roughly human size and facing the center of the room. In the northwest corner of the room a battered, iron door stands ajar."

If the players examine the statues they will find that each one has been damaged. The eye sockets have been chiselled away. (Originally set with gemstones but long since stolen)

5. Sepulcher of the Seven Kings (30'x60')

This is the earliest crypt of the Sardan'var Cult within the Rock. Here the ancient Warlords of the Haagan tribes were laid to rest.

"This room is divided by a large column of rock in the center of the room. The column is covered with intricate reliefs of various scenes of daily life. The walls of the room are painted with murals depicting scenes of great battles. On the west wall are seven marble plaques about 4' square and evenly spaced. Each block is inscribed with writing. (Haagan language)"

The marble plaques are actually blocks of stone sealing the tombs of the seven warlords. Each block has two iron loops set into it. (For inserting an iron bar and pulling the block out from the wall. The iron bar is now missing.)

A combined strength of 20 will be able to pull the blocks out from the tombs with no problem. Otherwise, roll a character's chance to open doors to succeed.

5A. Har Unthar's Tomb(8'x4')

The marble block on this tomb is inscribed;

"Har Unthar - conqueror of the gingo. Here lies the greatest of the great men"

If the players open this tomb they will find the following;

"Behind the stone is revealed a deep hollow. Lying face up, with its head toward the room, is a body. Mummified, it is in a surprisingly good state of preservation. Dressed in a full suit of leather armor and wearing a bronze helm, a beautiful bronze sword lies at the body's side. Placed around the body are an assortment of clay bowls and bottles."

The sword is ordinary and acts as a normal short sword. The armor is dry-rotted and will crumble if a character attempts to remove it. The helm is magical. Inscribed with runes, the helm prevents Har Unthar from rising from the dead. Poor Har was a vampire. The helm acts the same as a stake in the heart, if it is removed Har will regenerate and come to life in 1D8 rounds. (The vampires in this module are not of the standard variety. See FOES at the end of this article for details)

Har Unthar: AL: CE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 40; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10, XPV 300

The various bottles and clay vessels in this tomb are empty and represent items of food placed with the deceased for the after-life.

5B Dras Unthar's Tomb (8'x4')

The marble block on this tomb is inscribed;

"Dras Unthar - Crushed the Sarlange with Rage Here lies the Greatest among great men"

This tomb is empty. It shows traces of burial cloth and bits of bone.

5C Gang Jakivus' Tomb (8'x4')

The marble block on this tomb is inscribed;

"Gang Jakivus - Son of Shar Vuntus Served Sardan 'var for sixty years with honor"

If the players open this tomb they will find;

"A headless skeleton lies within the tomb. Its hands are folded across the chest, its hands grasping a large scroll."

The scroll is a spell book containing three spells. (DM's choice of type and level of spells.)

5D Unnamed Tomb (8'x4')

The marble block on this tomb has been damaged.

"The letters on this block appear to have been deliberately chipped away."

If the players open this tomb they will find it empty.

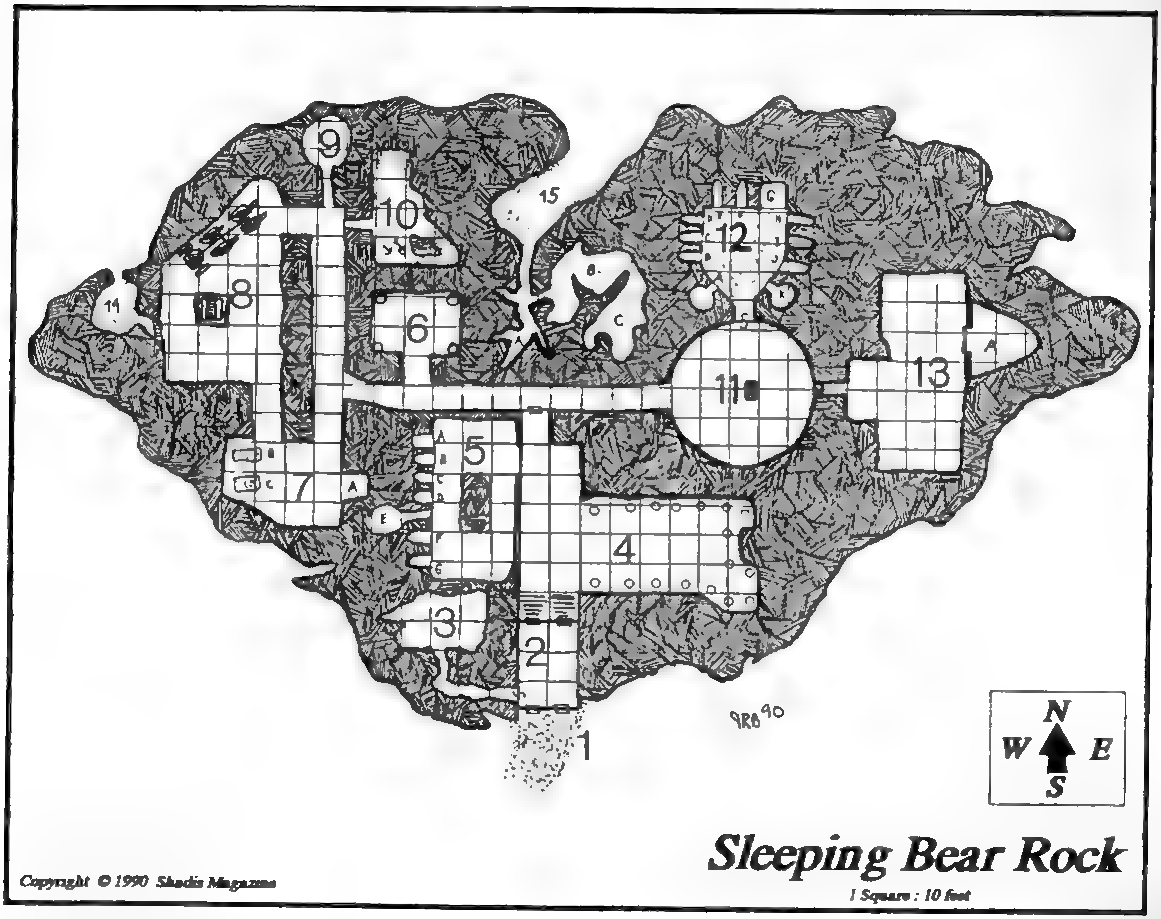
5E Ranfar the Great's Tomb (9'x9')

The marble block on this tomb reads;

"Here awaits the remains of Ranfar the Great. Ranfar who could find no foe in life to defeat him waits for he who would defeat him in death."

If the players open this tomb they will find a short passageway three feet wide leading to Ranfar's tomb. Upon reaching the tomb they will find;

"Sitting up and leaning on the back wall of the tomb facing you is a large mummified corpse dressed in bronze armor. A long sword rests in its lap, covered with cobwebs and a sheath of dust. The glimmer of gems reflects from a great necklace draped about the body's neck. Before the corpse, lies an array of weapons and personal belongings. Three skeletons lie along the east-north wall of the tomb."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Sleeping Bear Rock
1 Square : 10 feet
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Ranfar is a zombie in stasis. He will not animate unless he is touched or someone attempts to take his sword. The reanimation process will be slow, taking 1D3 minutes and the players should have plenty of time to grab any treasures and flee if they choose to do so.

Ranfar serves as the guardian of the crypts. He will search the tunnels for any intruders and attempt to eliminate them. When finished with his task he will reseal any crypts disturbed and return to his tomb.

Ranfar: AL: NE; MV 12"; AC 2; hp 60;
THACO 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8, XPV 750
*Note if Ranfar retains his sword add +3 to hit/dmg for his attacks.

The necklace about Ranfar's neck is valuable and worth 500 gp. The sword is ordinary to mortals but in the hands of an undead serves as a +3 long sword. The other weapons in this tomb are in a bad state of repair and are not worth noting.

5F. Unnamed Tomb
Same as 5D

5G. Unnamed Tomb
Same as 5D

6. Chamber of Blind Mage (30'x20')

This tomb is a shrine to one of the great mages of the Sardan'var cult.

"Standing in the center of the room is a rough-hewn column of white rock about four feet tall. Resting on top of the column is a large bronze urn. In each corner of the room is a similar column with a single human skull resting on each. The northern wall is a colorful mural and a large cloth banner stretches across the top of it."

The banner, written in Haagan, reads;

"When the stars fold and the sky wanes, the blind one shall rise to behold these things with his new eyes. And Sardan'var shall escort him from the grave."

The bronze urn holds the ashes of the blind mage. If the players move or lift the urn, a poisonous gas shall be released from the column, (+2 vs poison to save). Those successfully saving will take 1d4 points of damage and will be blinded for 1d2 rds. Those failing to save will take 1d8 points and be blinded for 1d6 rds.

If the players remove the ashes from the urn they will find 3 large rubies worth 175 gp each. While two of the rubies are of normal quality the third is magically charged. If the possessor holds the stone to one eye he will be able to see with normal infravision ability. However, since only one eye will be affected, the character would suffer -2 to hit while using the device from lack of depth perception. The stone must be held to the eye constantly in order to work.

7: Southern Chamber (Irregular)

This area was the last portion of the Rock to be tunneled and was an extension of Area 8. Here lie the wives of Lord Krastan.

"This room is daubed with a crimson tint. Delicate floral patterns of blue and green have been painstakingly painted around the borders of the walls and ceiling. Along the western wall two sarcophagi lie side by side. To the east, in a small hollow carved into the wall, lies a skeleton draped in white silk and surrounded with wilted flowers."

7A: Jarbyl Ra's Tomb (8'x4')

This is the body of one of Lord Krastan's favorite wives. She was also a great mage and priestess of the cult. About her neck is a gold mesh (value 100 gp). There is also a silver sacrificial dagger in her left hand. (75 gp)

7B: Empty Sarcophagus (8'x4')

If the players open this sarcophagus they will find it to be empty except for a skull.

7C: Empty Sarcophagus (8'x4')

If the players open this sarcophagus they will find a headless skeleton. Should the players be foolish enough to place the skull from 7B with the body it will regenerate in 1d8 rounds.

This is Vetra the vampiress. (See Foes)

Vetra: AL: CE; MV 9"; AC 8; hp 25; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3, XPV 20

8: Grand Chamber of Lord Kraatan (Irregular)

This is the tomb of Lord Kraatan the merciless.

"In the center of this room lies a sarcophagus. It is raised on a tier of granite slabs forming four steps reaching 6 feet in height. The steps and sarcophagus are deeply engraved with religious symbols and motifs. Along the northwestern wall is a gigantic wooden chariot harnessed to four huge bronze horses. The chariot is heavily loaded with a variety of personal belongings and weapons. On the wall is a huge tapestry with gaping holes, entirely blanketed with a layer of moss and mildew. On the southern wall hangs a large bronze shield with two enormous spears crossed at right angles behind it."

The Chariot was intended to carry the personal effects of Lord Kraatan into the next life. It is loaded with the following;

3 long swords (ordinary)
1 spear (ordinary)
1 pair of leather boots
1 small copper chest containing 300 gp
1 Scroll (Historical-mythical information on the DM's milieu. Perhaps a rumor of other dungeons, map etc.)

The bronze shield is cursed and attracts missiles. It will cause the bearer to suffer a -2 to his AC against missiles. (with no bonus whatsoever for the shield). Against battering and slashing attacks, the shield behaves as normal. Any arrows or missiles fired at anyone within 20 feet of the bearer will automatically be diverted and attempt to strike him. For every day the bearer possesses the shield there is a cumulative 10% chance that he will become obsessed with keeping it. Make one check per day. If he fails the check, he has become obsessed with the shield and will interpret any attempts to talk him out of keeping it as an act of betrayal or thievery.

9: Empty Crypt (15'x15')

This is an unremarkable tomb which was never utilized. It may prove useful to enterprising characters as a place of refuge. A large slab of stone leans against the eastern wall of the tomb which can be rolled over the entrance from the inside.

10: Incomplete Tomb (Irregular)

An extension of the Rock which was never completed. Work was still underway here when the valley flooded. Picks, shovels and loose rock lay strewn about the room, left by the workmen whose tasks were abruptly ended.

11: Temple of the Purple Heavens (50' diameter)

"The ceiling of this room is 50 feet high and dome shaped. It is painted black with white stars of florescent chalk mapping out the heavens. The effect is truly moving. Torch light gives the painted sky a very realistic effect and the stars appear to shimmer and twinkle. In the center of the room is an altar of white marble stained with dark red blotches."

The altar was where the vampire priests fed on their victims and performed their sacrifices to Sardan'var. The altar itself is magically charged with a fear spell. If anyone approaches the altar within 5' they must save vs. spell or flee the room in terror. Saving will still cause the character to have a deep feeling of dread and a sense of great 'evil.'

12: The Great Crypt (Irregular)

This room hidden by a secret door is where the priests of the cult have been laid to rest. This is also potentially the most dangerous area of the rock. If your players are not faring well up to this point then you may consider removing this area. This room is meant to be an equalizer, offering a greater challenge for higher level parties.

"Before you lies a room that appears to have been hastily constructed. Deep chisel and pick marks pock the walls and about the room shards of shattered rock still lie in small piles.

All about the perimeter of the room are eleven deep hollows carved into the walls. From many of them you can see skeletal remains protruding."

The priests are all vampires. When the valley flooded, they were trapped within the rock and starved for generations without blood. Now in a form of hibernation they will quickly awaken at the scent of warm blood.

They will awaken in 1d3 rounds and will in a ravenous frenzy attack the players. All characters must make a saving throw vs. fear (spell) or flee in terror.

The vampires will pursue the players relentlessly throughout the tunnels and will only cease their chase if confronted with sunlight or if killed. The hit points listed for the vampires have been reduced from lack of blood. If a character is downed, any vampires not engaged in combat will fall upon the character to feed. Any vampire who feeds for 1 combat round will receive 1d6 hit points. (Once per vampire).

12A: Vampire #1: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 30; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10, XPV 250

12B: Vampire #2: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 25; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8, XPV 225.

12C: Vampire #3: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 20; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6, XPV 200; Treasure: Jewelry (75 gp)

12D: Empty

12E: Vampire #4: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 5; hp 25; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8, XPV 250; Treasure: gold dagger (50 gp)

12F: Vampire #5: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 39; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8, XPV 300; Treasure Gold Ring (+1 Unarmed Combat)

12G: Vampire #6: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 3; hp 22; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10, XPV 20; Treasure None

12H: Empty

12I: Empty

12J: Vampire #7: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 4; hp 28; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8, XPV 200: Treasure Book (Two 3rd level MU spells)

12K: Vampire #8: AL: NE; MV 9"; AC 5; hp 15; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6, XPV 200 Treasure: None

13: Hall of the Thousand (30'x70')

"In this enormous room you are startled to find it filled with thousands of human skeletons. The entire floor of the room is covered with bones and numerous heaps reach a height of 10 feet or more. All four walls are covered with skulls stacked in rows from floor to ceiling. Large rats, alarmed by your presence scamper among the bones, squealing their protest"

There is nothing of value in this room. This is the mass tomb for the ordinary followers of Sardan'var. When a typical follower of the cult died, he was laid to rest in area 5 until the next person in the cult died. Then, his bones were moved here to join those who died before him.

13A: Treasury (Irregular)

Here, the personal weapons and valuables of the dead were stored. There are hundreds of long swords, spears, bows, arrows etc. Most are badly corroded and will not appeal to the characters with the following exceptions;

1 Long sword +2 vs. Undead
1 Spear with silver point
1 Long Bow with inlaid gold handle
Chest, 1,000 gp (poison needle trap)

14: Cave (15'x15')

This small cavern once penetrated deep into the Rock across area 8. When area 8 was constructed, the passage was bricked off. From the cavern the brick work is discernible (although undetectable from area 8) and the wall can be broken through in 1d10 rounds.

15: Sturm-Wolf Lair (Irregular)

This large cave network is the lair of a pack of sturm-wolves (Look elsewhere in this issue for more information on the Sturm-wolf.) There are four adult wolves, and four cubs.

The cubs will always be found at 15C. There is a 50% chance that the Adults will be in the cave. (50% chance of being at either 15A or 15B.) Otherwise, the Wolves are hunting and will return in 1D20 rounds.

Adult Sturm-wolf #1: AL: NE; MV 15"; AC 05; hp 38; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12, XPV 650
Adult Sturm-wolf #2: AL: NE; MV 15"; AC 05; hp 50; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1 4/1 4/1-12, XPV 700
Adult Sturm-wolf #3: AL: NE; MV 15"; AC 05; hp 29; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12, XPV 550
Adult Sturm-wolf #4: AL: NE; MV 15"; AC 05; hp 45; THACO 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12, XPV 600

The cubs are worth 200 gp each. There are no other treasures in this area.

FOES:

Sardan'var Vampires

These vampires are not 'true' vampires. They do not drain life levels when attacking, cannot turn into vapor, bats or wolves. And they do not have any control over wolves.

The only similarity with the normal variety of vampire is that they are both undead and have a need to consume fresh human blood. They also shun sunlight. Holy symbols and holy water have no effect on the Sardan'var. In all other respects they are similar to normal humans.

Sardan'var vampires have to have human blood to maintain their mental and physical capacities. When well fed they are hard to distinguish from a normal human. Deprived of human blood for more than a few days, the Sardan'var will become increasingly insane and will attack anything that moves. This frenzy makes them difficult to subdue and gives them advantages in combat.

A Sardan'var can be killed as a normal vampire with a stake through the heart. They can also be killed with magic or silver weapons. (After losing all his hit points as in normal combat.) When killed in normal combat there is only a 50% chance that the vampire will be truely dead. A vampire that is defeated in combat but not 'truely' killed will regenerate in 1d4 days. In addition, there are certain magical items and spells that can bind a Sardan'var vampire and hold him in stasis indefinitely. (For example the helmet in 5A)

A bite from Sardan'var only has a 20% chance of transmitting the affliction. Each consecutive bite will add 5% to that base chance. A player so infected will begin to demonstrate symptoms within 1d20 days. The first sign will be an aversion for sunlight. The player will experience discomfort from being in the sun. Eyes will tear and burn. Symptoms will increase and finally the character

will begin to crave blood. First he will prefer raw meat, then animal blood and finally his instincts will lead him to search for human blood at the source.

AFTERMATH:

If the players do not kill all of the vampires in the temple, then the Sardan'var's reign of terror will begin once again. Since the entrance to the network of tombs has been opened once again, they will venture forth each night. If the players do not kill the vampires, but have the insight to fill the pit back in, the vampires will be trapped until someone foolish enough comes along to expose the entrance again.□

Rustlers of the Night

Monstrosities and nasties from the Alderac Universe

By Jolly R. Blackburn

"..and many terrors lay low in the deep forests and in the dark of the leaves and foliage! Indeed, on the high mountains of the Brendar, you can find those creatures set loose on that day so long ago. Creatures who lust for the blood of men and seek to do them harm. That is why we heed every child to walk softly and not to shout and run about, for they shall hear and come rustling in the night."

From the Kabe-Troth

I. Sturm-Wolf (Sturm-grada)

STURM-WOLF (STURM-GRADA)
Climate/Terrain: *Temperate Forests, Hills, Mtns*
Frequency: *UnCommon*
Organization: *Pack*
Activity Cycle: *Any*
Diet: *Carnivore*
Intelligence: *Semi-intelligent (2-4)*
Treasure: *(see below)*
Alignment: *Neutral evil*

No. Appearing: *3-12 (3d4)*
Armor Class: *5*
Movement: *15*
Hit Dice: *6+6*
THACO: *15*
NO. of Attacks: *3*
Damage/Attack: *1-4/1-4/1-12*
Special Attack: *Thrash*
Special Defenses: *Nil*
Magic Resistance: *Nil*
Size: *Large*
Morale: *Elite (14)*
XP Value: *700*

Sturm-wolves are a species of carnivore that closely resemble the standard wolf. However, there are many differences. They are larger in size, standing from three to four feet at the shoulder. Sturm-wolves have powerful frames In the dark, a solitary Sturm-wolf can easily be mistaken for a large cave bear. In addition Sturm-wolves have fore-paws that resemble those of a bear, capable of rendering severe wounds.

The coat of the sturm-wolf is usually coal black though various shades and patterns of two or more colors have been reported.

COMBAT: Sturm-wolves are highly aggressive and will attack even a superior force without provocation.

As a pack, Sturm-wolves normally single out a victim and savagely attack. If there are any other targets in the area, the pack will very likely take pursuit. Sturm-wolves are infamous for overkill, not always killing to feed but often for the sake of a kill alone.

Sturm-wolves have the habit of becoming enraged when wounded. Severe blows, shouting etc. will normally drive the wolves into a fever-pitch and they will not withdraw until either their wounds prevent them from carrying on the attack or they are killed.

If a Sturm-wolf scores a jaw hit of 18 or better then he has locked into the flesh of his victim and may make a thrashing attack. A thrashing attack scores additional damage of 2d8 points. The powerful jaws of the Sturm-wolf are used to snap the neck of large game animals. The wolf will lunge at its prey, locking its jaws about the animal's neck and use its massive weight to aid it in breaking the neck.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Sturm-wolves have an excellent sense of smell. They can normally detect the scent of any large game in a given area up to one mile away.

Sturm-wolves are social creatures and are rarely found alone or far from a pack. Packs are relatively small, ranging from three to twelve adult wolves. One male Sturm-wolf will be the leader, being the strongest and most experienced hunter of the pack.

Packs are territorial. Territories are very large since it takes a relatively large number of game animals to support a pack. Territories will average from 25 square miles to 50 square miles. Often the chosen territory will be bordered by a large stream or river, where game animals tend to congregate. The pack will constantly roam within the bounds of their territory rarely spending more than a day at the same location. The exception is during mating season when the pack disperses for short periods of time. It is during this time, usually early spring, that Sturm-wolves, especially the male, will be encountered alone.

A pecking order is established within the pack. Normally the males of a pack will be required to vie for leadership numerous times because his status in the pack will be constantly challenged. When the pack reforms after mating season, a series of ritual fights break out between the males. Those who were too young or inexperienced the previous season to beat their competitors will try again. If a leader has grown too old or slow he will be quickly dislodged from his role. Some males after losing within their own pack will venture into another pack's territory seeking to challenge males of that pack.

Sturm-wolves communicate very effectively with barks, howls etc. If there are sturm-wolves in the area, they normally reveal themselves with their high-pitched howls.

A few Sturm-wolves captured as cubs have been successfully domesticated and trained. Some grevans have used them quite successfully as

war-dogs. There is a danger however. No amount of training or bond between master and sturm-wolf seems to be able to overcome the wolf's tendency to become outraged when attacked or provoked. When sufficiently enraged the sturm-wolf often becomes oblivious to friend or foe. Many a trainer has found himself the victim of his own loyal pet.

The teeth and claws of a sturm-wolf can demand as much as 200 gp in the large cities. The hide of a sturm-wolf can bring 500 gp.

ECOLOGY: Sturm-wolves prefer large grazing game such as deer, bison, and when the opportunity affords itself, sheep, cattle etc. They will, however, attack any animal they happen to encounter within their territory.

Due to their tendency to overkill, sturm-wolves will often deplete their territories of game to the point that a pack cannot support itself sufficiently. It may then attempt to expand its territories, or abandon them in favor of new ranges. Depending on the size and strength of a pack, they may be able to force another pack from its territory. If not, a pack may become uprooted and roam for months in search of a hunting range it can control. It is packs of this sort that humans most often encounter. A pack will often encroach upon human-settled lands and attack livestock as well as the human inhabitants.

II. Dralch (Dy'ndrill)

The Dralch are large creatures, humanoid in appearance and heavily encumbered with the bulk of their frames. They are slow moving. Indigenous to the *Northern Isles*, the dralch live on the rocky hinterlands where they gather food from tidal pools and snare sea birds. They have little industry or technical capability. While somewhat proficient in fashioning tools of stone or wood, they are very crude by Imperial standards. The dralch have found a limited trade with the Empire by selling the purple dyes obtained from various mollusks on the isles.

Dralch (Dy'ndrill)
Climate/Terrain: *Any (Native lands are Temperate)*
Frequency: *UnCommon*
Organization: *Clan/Tribe*
Activity Cycle: *Any*
Diet: [illegible]
Intelligence: *Average (8-9)*
Treasure: *O (x10)*
Alignment: *Neutral evil*

No. Appearing: *1-4 (1d4)*
Armor Class: *5(10)*
Movement: *6*
Hit Dice: *5+5*
THACO: *15*
NO. of Attacks: *1*
Damage/Attack: *per weapon, (+4 strbonus)*
Special Attack: *Nil*
Special Defenses: *Nil*
Magic Resistance: *Nil*
Size: *Large (7'tall)*
Morale: *Unsteady (7)*
XP Value: *650*

However, the immense strength of the dralch and their apparent docile composure has made them the perfect subservients. For many centuries, the dralch have been exploited and sold as slaves throughout the known world. At various times they have been used as warriors but with little effect. They do not work well as members of a team. Better suited for the dralch are those tasks which can be accomplished alone or in small groups. Tasks such as mining, road construction, clearing timber place a big demand for dralch slaves.

Because of their fearsome appearance the dralch have always been favorites in arena combat and as guards. The docility of the dralch can be broken and many opportunistic humans have discovered this. Once broken and provoked, a dralch makes a formidable opponent, especially in one-on-one engagements.

In recent years the use of dralch as slaves has grown increasingly unpopular. Not from compassion, for the Empire thrives on slavery, but from fear of the dralch. Numerous incidents have oc

curred where dralch slaves, pushed too hard or too long have revolted killing their masters and members of their household. Such dralch often in a rage, threaten the surrounding area for weeks while on a killing rampage. Such are the risks of pushing a dralch too far. A popular rule of thumb used by dralch slave masters is to work a dralch for five years as a laborer and then sell him to the arenas as a combatant.

COMBAT: The preferred weapon of the dralch are weapons of the club variety. Morningstars, maces etc. are often used if they can be obtained. Many dralch despite their slow-moving natures are very dexterious and quite easily master throwing the spear and using the bow.

As stated before, the dralch have a natural aversion for organization and are lousy warriors. One on one they are quite effective in combat, but when faced with multiple opponents they often resort to retreat or surrender.

Habitat/Society: On their native isles, the dralch are largely peaceful. Why creatures of such stature are endowed such timidity is puzzling. The society is centered around the tribe. The tribe is comprised of eight to twelve clans of 1d20 members each. Each clan dwells on its own lands and has little to do with the tribe as a whole except for inter-marriage, mass-rituals etc. In times of war the clans may relocate in a central location for a common defense.

ECOLOGY: The basic dralch family unit lives in crudely-thatched structures built to last for one or two seasons whereupon they are rebuilt from the ground up. Subsisting on a diet of fish, fowl and sea life gathered on the beaches and from tidal pools, the environment puts little demands on the dralch.

Some dralch displaced by other races or fleeing the slave trade, have adapted to a life in the deeper forests and have proven themselves capable hunters. Such dralch will almost always settle along a waterway. □

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Issue no.# 4 goes on sale on 15 July 1990

Of Embers Born

FICTION

By Frank R. VanHoose

PART III

Day 270 Year 100

The nimble feet of the young Ara'Sarlangans on the practice field created clouds of dust which were caught up by the wind and carried into the dark shadows of the Kalinor Forest. The hot mid-day sun and the exertions of practice formed rivulets of sweat which rushed across the dusty plains of the young combatant's bodies. These musky streams wound lazily beneath leather armor causing a constant itch which wouldn't be scratched until today's session was over.

The Vors'Bar, village war-master and the Vors'Evar, village elder stood side by side in what meager shade was cast by the little cabin where the practice weapons were stored. The Vors'Bar divided his attention between his charges on the dusty field and the old friend by his side.

Though the Vors'Bar had to split his attention, Reman's thoughts were firmly fixed on the figures of his daughter and her Abgreer companion. Dwarfing the figures milling around him, Orric fended off attackers from all sides. Weaving her way within the web of sword strokes woven by the padded wooden practice weapon he wielded, Seychelle darted and danced to attack and disappear once again into the protective sphere Orric provided. The teamwork displayed by the pair had been nurtured on this same field each day in the year that had passed since Seychelle had given Reman his grandson.

Reman well remembered the stir caused when his only daughter had returned to the village with Orric. Abgreer, the detestable humans who sought to conquer all they could see, were normally not welcome in a Sarlangan village. Several of the more militant village warriors made an attempt to send Orric back the way he had come. After great debate, Reman and the Vors'Bar had convinced them to drop their protests. Since a Sarlangan had invited the Abgreer to the village, they were bound by their own laws of hospitality. Reman would have been the first to chase the Abgreer giant from the forests if it had not been for his daughter's startling revelation. She had told them, "We are pledged and I am with child. I have come home to bear a son and he has come to learn the arts of war. Before the gods of our people I claim this man."

The pledge of a Sarlangan woman, a sacred oath, was binding. Anyone who caused a Sarlangan child to be born without a father was obliged to take responsibility for that child and pro-

vide for mother and babe. The rest of the village backed off to await developments and Reman welcomed his daughter along with her unwelcome guest into his home.

No one had ever tried to force Orric from the village. But the breeze stirred by wagging tongues could have blown down trees clear to the mighty Kalinor. Seychelle's physical condition had elicited a few guarded comments and spawned many theories.

Though neither she or Orric would talk about the past, admitting only that they had met "in the south," the scars on Seychelle's body soon became common knowledge.

The subject was not brought up, however, within hearing distance of the strange couple, for the last person to have done so spent ten days in the healer's hut. Orric, enraged by the young Sarlangan's remark, picked him up and threw him through a wall.

Tal'n, the Vors'Bar, had at first refused to teach Orric but was convinced to change his mind by Reman, who was his oldest and closest friend. Once begun, the challenge of turning this awkward but titanic Abgreer into a warrior had consumed him. Day after endless day, while Seychelle prepared for the coming birth of her child, Orric sweated on the practice field. And in the process, tolerated being battered, bruised and humiliated by a string of Sarlangan youths who were also training in the arts of war.

Orric suffered this ignominy in silence. When asked if he had had enough, he would only stare eastward toward the Grevan plains for a brief moment. Then he would assume the beginning stance for training and grunt, "Again."

Day 275 Year 100

In a small, ramshackle hut that leaned tiredly against the 'One-eyed Man,' a tavern of ill repute in the lower quarter of Soult Tet, lived a powerful wizard known as Auros.

Auros buried himself here in the forgotten dregs of the capital's poor where he practiced his outlawed craft. He was protected from the Emperor's guards both by his location and the scum of the Soult Tet underworld. It was for these dregs of society he grudgingly interrupted his studies to cast spells of doom upon those who stuck their noses too deeply into the crime lord's business.

Auros needed this protection because the practice of magic in the Empire was cause enough to be put to death. Too many disasters had been caused by dabblers in the magical arts. Now, to be caught performing magic was a quick way to the front of the line for the Tandor's ax. So, here Auros remained hidden as he delved ever deeper into the mysteries, pursuing his one love; power.

He traded his spells to various factions of thieves and assassins in return for their protection, shelter, and any magic items or scrolls they happened to come across. Mostly it was petty magic that was requested of him. But occasionally he was sought out to cast spells of a greater kind. For these he demanded higher compensation before casting. Each one depleted the pool of available magical energy in the area and drained his physical strength. But, now he had gained enough knowledge to cast the spell he had planned for years. Thanks to anonymous tips provided to the authorities by his underworld 'friends,' nearly every mage in Soult Tet had been exposed and dealt swift justice at the hands of the Rader-Keem. As a result, the pool of magic around Soult Tet was as great as it had been for generations.

Hidden in a scroll he had gotten in exchange for an amulet was the last piece to his puzzle. Now it was time. The hiding would be over. Auros would no longer be subject to the Emperor's laws or the restrictions of a physical body.

He had found the path to immortality; that precious idea had been sought unsuccessfully throughout the ages. He would find freedom from the bonds of death, disease and old age. No longer must he pay the price for casting powerful spells

with his health and sanity. No limit could be placed on him. His name would be known throughout the world and feared.

Auros took a final look around the hut where he had spent so many years of his life in discomfort and he smiled. The warped boards of the walls would no longer be his prison and the laws of a mortal Emperor and the greed of petty criminals would no longer chain him. Everything was in readiness. All his materials were close at hand. He was rested. The magic aura was strong. The TIME had come. He sank to the floor cross-legged before a small brazier and sprinkled powders into the glowing coals. Inhaling deeply of the fragrant smoke, he began to chant.

The magic struggled to evade Auros' control. It surged against his will, seeming to look for a weak point in his mastery.

He was taking a tremendous risk. The slightest mistake in pronunciation, the smallest detail overlooked could spell disaster. Still, he inhaled the smoke given off by the brazier and chanted, gathering in power to use. The chant continued and magic gathered around the tiny hut, fighting against the bonds placed upon it. For miles around Soult Tet, small-time dabblers in magic found that even the simplest spells were failing, as the powers were drawn toward the capital's slums.

The *Great Mage* counselors of the Emperor, by now would have detected the tremendous drain on the magical-aura and were now frantically alerting the guards. But it would be too late.

Such forces as would be unleashed had never been controlled. None dared. None save Auros.

Finally, the power had been gathered and chained. Auros rested and gathered his concentration for the next step; the direction. Auros sprinkled a new powder on the brazier and inhaled deeply of this smoke, beginning the spell which would free his spirit from the bonds of his body. He directed all the chained magic inward, toward where he sat. Now he was putting himself in great danger if anything should go amiss. The only thing left to do would be to key the spell.

Outside a cloaked figure rounded the corner of the 'One-eyed Man.' Just as Auros finished the spell of direction, the figure approached the door to his small shack.

Auros sprinkled the final powder on the brazier and inhaled deeply. The critical component of the spell was at hand.

The figure shoved the door open slamming it against the wall. The sudden racket startled Auros. Surely the guards couldn't have located him so quickly. His concentration broke. How could he have forgotten to bar the damned door? He could feel the pool of magic he had gathered under his control suddenly tear at its chains.

The figure threw a small amulet down on the floor. It clattered and bounced and came to rest at Auros' feet.

Hate and anger filled his mind. Not now!

The magic surged.

"Auros, you cheat! That damned love amulet didn't work..."

Amulet? Amulet? Suddenly Auros recalled the love amulet. Such a minor magic.

All could be lost because of this fool and a....

Auros' senses reeled as anger controlled his mind, his concentration, already weakened by his spell casting, broke....

The chains loosened and Auros could see his plans crashing down around him all because of an amulet of ...

"LOVE!" he screamed as the chains restraining the magic broke and it rushed inward along the path he had prepared.

Auros' body dissolved into nothingness. Along with it went the hut, the cloaked figure, the 'One-eyed Man' and all its patrons. The air rushing into the vacuum left by the disappearance of the structures caused a crack of thunder loud enough to cause hearing losses in survivors up to three blocks away. A flash of light arrowed its way skyward, blinding many who were looking in its direction.

By the time Seychelle's son, Gicha arrived, much of Orric's awkwardness and all of his excess weight had disappeared. Now, though the sweat had not lessened, the bruises were being distributed in a far more democratic manner.

The villagers learned that the mountainous Abgreer had a good mind as well as great strength. Since his arrival, Orric had learned much of the language. He had gone from knowing only the few Sarlangan words he had picked up from Seychelle, to the point where he could speak as well as most Sarlangans, and truth be told, even better than some.

Once the Sarlangan smith had cautiously allowed Orric to use the facilities of his smithy, he was amazed at his skill. Those huge hands, which were now beginning to wreak havoc on the practice field, could also etch glyphs of almost unnatural beauty or cast a blade of perfect balance and razor sharpness. Many nights after darkness had called a halt to the day's war practice, the two smiths would linger in the smithy, working and talking.

In truth, by Gicha's birth, Orric was no longer merely tolerated, but a respected part of the village. His strangeness was now familiar and no one really noticed when he would sit at Reman's door and look eastward listening to the wind as if it had secrets for his ears alone.

The birth of a child is a special time for the Ara'Sarlange for Sarlangan females are only fertile for a few short years of their lives. The birth of Gicha, therefore, was cause for a festival and a holiday for the whole village. This birth was anticipated more than usual because of the unusual bonding that had brought it into being. (The villagers still considered Orric the father and that was strange enough for them.)

The actual birthing of Gicha passed quickly, for Sarlangan women give birth with less effort and trauma than women of other races. After the 'three days of uncertainty' had passed, the entire village gathered around the pavilion that had been erected in front of Reman's house to watch the ceremonies of acceptance and naming.

No child was deemed to exist until after Handaran'Paus, the 'three days of uncertainty,' had passed. Sarlangan children usually survive if they have lived past their third day of life, so all Sarlangans celebrate their birthdays four days later than their actual birth date. The fourth day is when the ceremonies of Jendra Keen, the rites of acceptance and naming were held.

The ceremony of Jendra Keen consists of the father of the child being shown the child for the first time and taking the child into his arms, signifying his acceptance of responsibility for the child. If the child's father is dead, unknown or absent, then a suitable male is chosen by the mother. If he is willing to accept responsibility for the child, he then assumes the place of the father. If the father is

not available and no other male is acceptable to the mother or willing to take responsibility for the child, then the village elder must take responsibility for the child in the name of the whole village.

The ceremony of *Natrain-Kar*, the naming, then follows. Here, the father whispers the child's true name into the child's ear so that the child will always know who he or she is and the mother reveals the use name that the child will use until it is old enough to choose its own use name. The conclusion of the ceremonies come when the father presents the child with a *Vurvan Traus*, an item of symbolic nature and great importance. The item will become the child's symbol for his or her entire life.

Often the gift will be one that reflects the parent's hopes and dreams for their child's future. A father who hopes his son will become a great hunter might give the child a claw from one of the great cats that roam the Kalinor. Hopes for a great healer might be illustrated by the gift of a sprig of one of the medicinal herbs. After the giving of the birth gift, the father will take the child from its mother's arms and hold it aloft to present it to the assembled villagers. This concludes the birth ceremonies and signals the beginning of feasting and celebration so the entire village can share in the joys of the new addition to the population.

On day 19 of the 10th month of the year 100, as time is reckoned in the Ragean Empire, Seychelle gave birth to a wildly squalling baby boy. The village held its collective breath throughout the 'three days of uncertainty' to see if this strangely planted seed would take root and grow. Reman paced the floor of his home for endless hours while Orric fought demonically on the practice field. Seychelle and the child remained secluded with the village midwives. Rumors flew through the village streets as everyone rushed to voice an opinion as to the nature of the child. Few successful unions had ever been made between Sarlangans and Abgreer and the public presentation of this child was anticipated to an extent never before seen in the village.

On day 23 of the 10th month of the year 100, at the exact same hour the child had been born, the waiting period ended.

Everyone who did not have duties that required them to be elsewhere, gathered in the clearing that served as the village-meeting place. A small platform had been erected in front of Reman's house. A single large chair had been placed on it. Soon it would be time for the presentation of The Child. The time for speculation was ended. Now all would know. Sarlangan? Abgreer? Monster?

The tale would now be told. The door to Reman's house opened and silence reigned supreme.

Reman and Orric aided Seychelle in getting to her seat on the platform. She sat quietly with her small, blanket-covered child hugged to her breast. Orric took his place behind the chair and Reman stepped forward to face the crowded clearing.

"Handaran'Paus the 'time of uncertainity' has ended. My daughter has given our village a new life, a son." Solemnly he continued the formula of the ceremony. "Who is to take responsibility for this child?"

Orric moved from behind Seychelle's chair and faced Reman. "I will."

Reman turned to look at his daughter. "Is this man acceptable?"

"Yes."

Reman returned his attention to Orric. "Greet your son."

Orric stepped to face Seychelle and held out his hands. "I greet my son."

Wordlessly, Seychelle placed the still hidden child in Orric's large hands. The giant Abgreer stood awkwardly holding his tiny burden. He then cradled the child in the crook of his left arm, gently folding back the blanket so he could see the child's face. "This is my son. I accept him as my own and take a vow to see to his care. I will place his life

above my own."

A ragged cheer sputtered from the midst of the crowd. The child had been accepted. But that wasn't what they were here for. They awaited the presentation. What was this child?

Orric held the still sleeping infant in the crook of his left arm as he removed a small object on a chain from within his jerkin. Placing the chain over the child's head he bent over and whispered the child's true name into its ear.

After he had done this, he again looked at Seychelle who gave the child its use name. Only those very close to the platform were able to hear, for she spoke very quietly. Now Orric turned to again face the gathered throng and stepped to the front of the platform. The silence deepened to an almost physical presence.

Orric unfolded the blanket away from the child and cupped one hand under its buttocks, placing the other under its head. He raised the child high into the air and proclaimed, "This is my son. He will be known as Gicha."

The silence held for a long moment as the villagers took in the newborn's features. Sarlangan for sure, but no resemblance to Abgreer. Looked more like a Grevan. What mystery lay here? Still, he was a welcome addition to a village that saw too few children. This time the cheer was heartfelt from the whole village.

Though the cheer was loud, it wasn't long. As Orric held the child high in his outstretched arms an arrow of light erupted in the sky slicing the cheer into nothingness. Like a shooting star going in reverse, the flash traveled from earth to sky. Yet the light was much brighter than any star.

An omen? Of good or evil? What could it mean that it should happen at the moment of the child's dedciation? All the questions that before were thought to be answered, again rushed through the minds of the villagers. Orric stood on the platform, holding Gicha high over his head. Hanging on a light chain around the child's neck was an arrowhead covered with dried blood and over him shone an omen none could explain.

The entity that was once the human mage Auros drifted in the great void. Time past unnoticed. The physical change experienced by Auros was matched by an even greater change in his mindset; a metamorphasis brought about by the last word he had uttered in human form.

Many great wizards had drifted across the face of Alderac through out the ages. But none of them had dared to cast such a powerful spell. Only a god or a madman would have the audacity to believe he could pull it off such a tempt of fate..

Yet the results of that spell were not as expected. The focus of the spell was to be keyed on the word 'Power'. But instead of the power Auros so craved, in a moment of rage he had forgotten himself, and uttered a word that had no real meaning for him; love. A miscast minor love spell had been the undoing of all his carefully-laid plans.

The spell had given him a new mindset, a new outlook, and strangest of all a conscience. Now, somewhere between the realm of mortals and that of the gods, Auros drifted and reflected on his life. A flood of remorse consumed him. Deep sorrow replaced the estatic joy he had expected to experience at the height of his accomplishments.

As he drifted in the void his essence drew together. His thoughts returned to him and along with them the memories of his detestable life. He sat as a witness and reviewed all the suffering he had caused, viewed the effects of his endless deceits. He saw the teachers he had betrayed, the friends he had driven from him as a result of his anger and petty greed.

Now from his vantage point he suddenly came upon the face of Alderac. Like a ghost he found that he was able to wander among the living. Unseen, he viewed the events taking place across the land where thousands of mortals fought and died at the command of a few who sought to gather power and wealth under their control. Auros felt compassion. These were strange emotions for him

and painful to endure. It took much time for him to come to terms with them and the new mindset.

Auros felt compelled to intervene in these evils he witnessed. He became determined to bring love into a world ruled by strife.

Yet he had no physical means of intervening. Ironically, he surmised that he needed a body again. He decided that he would need a spokesman; someone young, with a malleable mind that he could mold and twist to his aims. To this mortal he would give many powers and abilities. He would raise him up among his fellow men. Even the Emperor would take notice. This prophet would spread his message of peace and love across the face of Alderac. But it would take time. First he needed to draw himself together and make plans. There was no hurry, for time was no longer a real consideration.

"Break!" The Vors'Bar's voice cut through the thud of padded practice weapons, as well as the gasps and grunts of his charges, bringing a halt to all activity on the practice field. The Vors'Bar cast an eye at the length of the shadows that were gradually encroaching on the practice field. "That's it for today. Gelston, you better not go running after Maline tonight. I've got something for you tomorrow. I've told you a thousand times about dropping your blade tip. Come this time tomorrow, you won't be forgetting again."

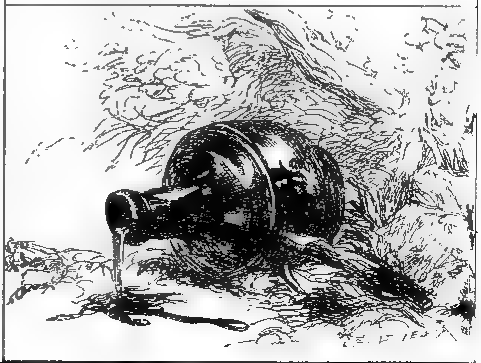
"Yoster, Korven, gather the gear and make sure it's put away right this time. We lost half the morning getting things sorted out because of the way you just threw things in the arms room."

"Listen, all of you. Those damned grevans have been seen drawing closer to our village in he past weeks. The time may soon come when the weapon you hold won't be covered in leather and your foe'll be trying to do more than bruise your ribs and put a lump or two on your thick skulls! What you've been taught here as children will soon require you to become men. Now, get out of here."

Reman and the Vors'Bar, Oshen, talked late into the hours of darkness. With the new incursions into the Kalinor by the grevans, the forest patrols must be strengthened. Even though they weren't really ready, the best of Osten's students would be placed on duty with the forest patrols. Times were changing in the Kalinor. The once fragmented grevan tribes were being united by Rang Taw and threatening the entire Stor'Greva region. The great empire to the south was beginning to feel the effects of a more united grevan people on its northern border and even the isolation of the Kalinor wasn't enough to protect Reman's people.

War was coming and sacrifices would have to be made. Reman hated the thought of seeing his only child caught up by the coming conflict "No matter what the future will bring," he promised himself, "Gicha will be well protected. My grandson, at least, won't die at the hand of a grevan pig. Should the worst come to pass, I'll send him to my kin in the Sadok deep in the empire where even the grevan won't be able to reach him."

On day 5 of the 10th month in the year 101, Orric and Seychelle, along with ten other half-trained Sarlangan warriors joined the forest patrols. Theirs were two smiling faces among the solemn uncertainty of the new patrol members. Someone, at least, looked forward to the chance to meet a grevan or three.



An Axe To Grind

Guest Editorial
•Karen M. Bozell•

What is fantasy? Webster defines it as "the free play of creative imagination; imaginative fiction featuring strange settings and grotesque characters, also called fantasy fiction."

But, what is fantasy to a role-player? Strange and grotesque? Possibly. Creative and imaginative? Hopefully. Fiction? Absolutely!

In the quest to make role-playing games realistic, it is easy to let the fantasy slip away. Here are some ideas drawn from my own experiences as a role-player, that can offer some solutions to getting your game back to the 'free play of creative imagination'.

Supplies

When our group generates their characters, we let our imaginations run wild. How do they look? What do they wear? What are there backgrounds? What makes them unique individuals and not just a list of numbers? Of course, there are often limits built into the game system that you are using, i.e. a limited number of weapons, armor, races etc. Such limits often exist to provide game balance and playability.

But, there is most always a generous list of miscellaneous supplies, such as torches, rope, flint, etc., that can the player can pour over. I've found that keeping a player adequately supplied can really bog down the game and bore the players.

So instead of buying , say, 20 torches and having to keep track of them as they are used, why not assume that everyone in the party has torches enough to last for the duration of a session and also has the necessary means to light them?

In our group, we assume that each player has such common items as 10' of rope, water and food to last for the entire session. If this kind of 'assumption' causes problems for the DM or players then perhaps it can be handled abstractly. For example each time a party enters a town or village the players can all deduct 50 gold pieces from their purses for general supplies. The DM and players can decide what items are included in that category so that there will never be any question of what a character is carrying. If there should be a time when any of these items come into play, such as torches getting wet while the character crosses a river, the DM can then make the decision as to how that one person's lack of torches affects the party in combat.

This way, instead of "How many torches do I have left?" and "Who brought the rope?" or "I'm hungry, did I bring any food?", we are free to fight monsters, find treasure, and generally save the human race from certain extinction.

Combat

I'll probably never save a princess from an evil wizard, or kill a red dragon and cart home wagons full of treasure. In role-playing, however, each of us has a chance to become the hero.

Once a character has been outfitted, (maybe even with torches!), and is off seeking fame and fortune, how awful to have that character killed or mortally wounded by an unexpected encounter with a vicious monster (Especially when the monster was a surprise encounter, won initiative and did maximum damage on it's first attack. All before the character even knew what hit him.)

Picture this: You go to the movies. You shelled out $10.00 for tickets and $5.00 for popcorn and a drink. Lights dim. Opening credits roll. James Bond is walking down a foggy London street. This is going to be a great movie. Suddenly, a man jumps out of an alley behind our hero and aims a gun at Bond's head. Bond turns just in time to see the assailant pull the trigger. A shot rings out, and a bullet lodges into Bond's forehead. He falls to the ground, dead. The assailant runs away and you sit staring at the screen in shock. Fade to Black. Roll credits. Lights on. Show's over.

"Impossible!" you protest. Sure it is: Bond never gets killed at the beginning of a movie, or at the end. He's a hero. It wouldn't be any fun.

Well, in fantasy role-playing, the player characters are the heroes. why not let the monster's first attack always miss? Or let the hit do only half-damage?

In group combat, once again you don't see Bond being hacked to death by a bunch of grunts sent by Mr. Big. He shoots one, that guy's out of the picture--even if Bond only shot him in the foot. The party may get bogged down sometimes in combat with large numbers of easy to kill monsters because of bad dice rolls. One way to help this along is to say that if a character hits the orc, the orc is DEAD! This would not apply, of course, to higher level monsters, but they don't usually appear in such large numbers. Believe me, I have nothing against large battles. They can be very entertaining. But I so much more enjoy getting quickly through the orc guards to get to the dragon's lair or to the wizard's keep to save the princess. Besides, orcs are sooo UGLY!

Probably, if we were to look at the rules for most role-playing games these ideas would not mesh very well with them. However, if fantasy really is free play, these ideas could be just what a campaign needs to rekindle the fantasy of fantasy role-playing.

So, put on your armor, grab your weapon, purchase 50 gold pieces worth of supplies-and let's go save the world. □

• *Next Issue* •

Daniel Giddings'

'Pozoe n' Logo' Returns

• Last Minute Credits and Thanks •

Illustrations this issue;

Pages 2,8,40, 51: Daniel Giddings

Page 45: Bill Niverson

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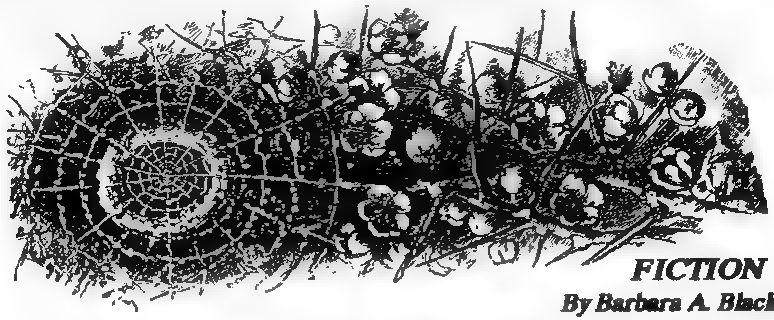
We'd like to thank the following people for going out of their way to help SHADIS; Chris Engle, Ian Shires, Bill Jensen, Darvin Durham, George Vrbanic

The Shriek of Soult Tet



FICTION

By Barbara A. Blackburn

PART III

JUST A DREAM

Day 202 Year 108

"Watch...out...shadow...man...follows," mumbled Draya before collapsing to the dirty street.

Gar and Shindar knelt beside her. As they attempted to revive her, they wondered.

"What did she say?"

"I think she said someone is...following us. It's too dark I can't see anyone else. I can barely see you."

Failing to bring their friend to consciousness, Gar lifted her to his thin, muscular shoulder.

"It's late," Gar said. "We can't walk the streets all night, it's not safe. Draya is in bad shape, she needs a bed and some nourishment. I say we head toward the Tharlflax manor and stay there. It IS our inheritance."

Turning the corner onto a dimly lit street they hoped that their late uncle's home could be found in the jumble of city streets. And they hoped it would be the haven they so desperately needed.

Deep within the imperial residence, Matra'Kar, in the dark master chamber an aged regal figure tossed and turned upon his soft bed.

The bed, with its jewel-encrusted headboard, was now a jumble of silken sheets and hand-woven, gold-embroidered blankets.

Emperor Sageem ruled multitudes, yet he could not control his dreams. All of the Imperial Legions could not stop the onslaught within his mind.

Suddenly, the eagle-eyed leader's gnarled body bolted into a sitting position.

Clutching his blanket like a frightened child, he cried out for his servant Burnok.

Sobbing, he was not the dignified ruler of an empire tonight. He was a broken waif thrown into the streets to face the world alone.

Soon the door to his room burst open and a disheveled man of fifty entered, wiping the sleep out of his eyes.

"M'lord," he managed to say between yawns.

"Burnok! Come close...they're closing in. Quickly! They want my head, my throne, please..."

The manservant had spent many nights such as this. He was the only one who had ever seen the emperor in all of his glorious weakness.

He sat on the corner of the bed and put a

large, comforting hand upon the slender shoulder that shook violently beneath it.

Weeping, the leader recalled his latest nightmare.

"He was there...the mage. Oh, I saw him. Behind him was the thing! The beast slithered, awaiting his command to tear me to shreds. Kol was smiling...it was an awful smile. And the beast, it...it smiled...it smiled too! It was awful!" he screamed and fell upon Burnok's shoulder.

"It was a dream, just a dream. Calm yourself, I'm here."

"You don't understand! As I backed away from the giant and his wicked creature I bumped into the boy!"

"Who? How can a boy hurt you?"

"Are you mad?" Sageem screamed grabbing the servant by the collar of his robe. Jerking on the linen garment, he raved, "Scav Sagenthor is the most dangerous boy in the land! He was here, in my room, in my mind, I don't know which anymore. Behind him was an army, and...Raventhorpe! His corpse, mangled as it was from hitting the rocky cliffs was no longer dead. He was here too and his anger was searing. It burned into my eyes until I was blind."

"Help me Burnok. I'm so weary, haven't slept for who knows how long now. Please, I'd give the empire for a night's sleep."

Burnok patted the royal head and arose. "Excellency, remember; with great responsibility comes great strife. But you will prevail as always. Your will is strong, your courage great. Your enemies quake at the mention of your name and flee before you. Lie back now and I will return with a hot cup of hion-laced tea. You know the hion powder can soothe like nothing else."

He turned to leave.

"Wait, don't go. I am afraid, please."

"Sire, hide beneath the wings of your god and I will return, bearing the gift of sleep."

Burnok exited swiftly, leaving the ruler to his paranoia.

The next morning, after a late sleep, Sageem arose feeling refreshed. The night's terrors had faded, left behind for another time.

After a light, but sinfully-sweet breakfast, he dressed in his yellow-quilted winter robe and placed the imperial headpiece upon his greying head.

He was ready for business, and two of his faithful advisors waited in the emperor's study.

"Get up! I've no time for the customary grovelling! Tell me what I need to know and be gone. My time's precious."

"Sire," wheezed a stuffy woman of thirty-five, "My contact has been following the young woman who had raised the fuss about the monster earlier. He has made a report..."

"Yes?" interrupted the leader, "what did he tell you? Has she mentioned the creature to anyone else?"

"No, she has not. She was joined by a young man, who seems to be her brother. Also, among them is a young woman who the spy has recognized from his days among the Sadoks. She had been injured, possibly fatally during a brawl at the inn where they were staying. After the fight they fled and wandered until they entered the house of the late Brakis Tharlflax."

"Brakis! What are they doing there? Do you think they knew him?"

"My source overheard part of their conversation and thinks they said he was their uncle."

"WHAT? That can't be! In that case I don't want your informant to leave them for a moment, is that clear?"

"Of course, he is the best. They won't even know he's around."

"If he loses them...let's just say that you and your slimy friend will suffer the full weight of my wrath. I can't afford anymore nosy Tharlflax's poking about into my affairs."

"As you wish. I will not fail you my Lord."

Bowing low, the woman made her exit

and Sageem turned his attention to his religious advisor.

Uliar, was a man of extreme age. His wrinkled brow had seen much turmoil.

"What have you to tell me about the events at the temple. Has the atmosphere changed? Does the congregation seem willing to make a change? Has the high priest made his declaration?"

Before Uliar could open his mouth to respond, horrendous shouts resounded through the marble corridors.

Sageem's face grew red with wrath. He exploded through the door and screamed as he entered the hall.

"Who dares to distrub the sanctity of Matra-Kar? He shall pay with bone and blood! Who dares raise his voice in here?"

Striding out of the midst of a pack of palace guards, stepped a towering figure clad in flowing red robes.

"Kol!" Sageem exclaimed and stepped back in undisguised fear.

"Yes, I am here and I won't leave without settling accounts!"

Two guards stepped forward and grasped the muscular arms of the intruder. "We'll take care of him your excellence. What would you like us to do with him, take him to Bowmar?"

Kol glared at the ruler with eyes of steel.

"N-no. Leave him. We'll be fine. Everyone! Leave us at once!"

The hall emptied rapidly and soon the two were alone.

"What was so urgent you had to barge into my palace and make a fool of yourself?"

"Your Highness!" Kol spat with contempt. "Forgive the intrusion. I came, as I said, to settle accounts."

Controlling his fear, the emperor stepped closer.

"My friend. We can indeed come to terms without shedding tears or blood. Come into my study and let us talk like civilized men."

As the two moved into the darkened room full of books and parchments they seated themselves at the large polished oak table.

"Now, what is it you want?"

Kol stood to his feet and pounded on the table with his large fist.

"You know very well what I want Sageem. I did your dirty work and now I want the promised reward."

"Oh yes, well, there has been some difficulty acquiring your reward as some relatives of the late gentlemen have shown up to claim it. We have several other lovely estates available immediately, of course..."

Kol nearly leapt over the table at the ruler, bringing his face to within inches of his sovreign.

"You promised me THAT house and I want it NOW! Do I make myself clear? If not, I can summon a certain slimy beast to make an imperial snack of you."

"Enough! Though it is true, you and your monster strike fear into my heart as they would anyone, I will not be threatened! Do you know who I am? I rule millions, my armies are vast and my power is absolute! I have ways of dealing with even you my magical friend."

Sageem's anger seethed through his veins, yet the eerily powerful look in Kol's eyes convinced him to check his tongue before it was too late.

"Still, let us calm ourselves," the ruler continued. "The empire is at stake and heated words will not save it. You must understand that I cannot give you what you want at this time. I must find out what the intruders know and the only way I can do that without bringing them in and torturing them is to watch them. I can only watch them if I know where they are. To bring them in would create suspicion. Who knows how many other relatives they have. I would love to be done with the whole lot of them. And they will meet their end when I have found out what I need to know. In fact, you may have the pleasure of engineering

their demise yourself if you'd like. Then, you are free to move into the estate and claim it."

"I do not kill for sport my lord. And, my reward has already been earned. It's your job to ready it for me, as I intend to take it. What I did for you cost me dearly. Summoning that thing drained my very soul. You cannot imagine the price that must be paid to access the forces you bade me unleash. Yet, you would give me nothing for my trouble."

"Your monster did not slay the man I ordered. The filthy beast chose the girl as its victim and therefore, by all rights, you did not fulfill your end of the bargain."

"You are nothing but a dishonorable pirate, unfit to lead those who are your betters! You know I told you that the monster was difficult to control. You know I said there would be no guarantees as to whom its victim would be. But all you could think about was setting it loose, your hate blinded you and it will defeat you one day.

"And, indirectly, my creature did kill the old man. What's the matter, didn't he suffer enough to fulfill your bloodlust? Wasn't it enough that his heart exploded with killing grief after seeing his neice's mangled body. My creature did that. If you try to back out on me now, I won't rest until you join that poor girl in the ranks of "Shriek" victims. And I will tell the Rader Keem of your treachery. They won't be happy to learn you have the blood of innocents on your hands. The Benyaran priests might like to know just how 'righteous' you are. Maybe that boy Sagenthor would like to hire me to get rid of his opressor. I'd be willing to bet that he won't doublecross me."

"Don't be ridiculous! You will get your payment, upon my honor."

"I'm beginning to wonder if you have any honor, but I will give you until the next Flur'mar. If you have still not made good on your word, I will be strong enough to again call on my beast and he will have a feast of imperial quality," Kol laughed loudly at his own clever word play. Whirling in place, the wizard disappeared in a flurry of crimson robes. The palace still echoed with his booming laughter long after he was gone.

Shindar and Gar took turns tending to Draya through the night. The young woman's battered body convulsed violently at times and she would mutter incomprehensible phrases.

Gar and his sister cleansed the wounds they could see. They bandaged some jagged cuts upon her brow and Shindar could tell that Draya had at least one broken rib, for she often doctored her family's animals back in West Fork and was familiar with such injuries.

After doing as much for her as they could, the two waited and prayed. Not only for her, but also for themselves.

Shindar was standing by the window looking out over her uncle's garden, now overgrown and unkempt, when she heard Draya's small child-like voice.

"Hey, what kind of place is this? This is fancy! You sure we're still in Soult Tet? Knowing you two, we're lost and ended up in Shadlet or something."

Shindar turned and smiled warmly. "I'm so glad to see you feeling better. We're in my uncle Brakis' manor."

"That's nice. Where's your uncle? I'd like to thank him."

"He's no longer alive. We came here to this city to visit him and our sister Jerar who was taking care of him. She was killed and he died soon after. This belongs to us now."

Draya dropped her head. "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to pry. I guess that's what you two have been talking about all along. That's why you're asking about that monster?"

At that moment Gar strode into the room, carrying a cup of tea.

"Draya! You're better!" The boy broke out in a broad grin and threw his long arms around the girl's shoulders, letting the cup fly out of his

grasp.

Shindar and Draya cast amused looks at each other at his outburst.

"Watch out you overgrown ox! Your sister did such a great job of patching me up, don't you ruin her work."

As the three visited, suddenly Draya's face drew deathly pale. Falling back onto the pillow she moaned.

Rushing to her side, Shindar took her hand. "What's wrong? Are you in pain?"

"That man! The man that was following us that night, after the fight. In the window! I just saw his face, in the window. He knows we're here. We have to leave! When it gets dark we can sneak out."

"Where can we go?"

"You leave that to me, I know a place where no one will ever look or follow."

They began planning their escape, packing food, bandages, wine, warm clothes and a lantern. It was hard to leave a place of such comfort, but as the night grew black, Gar and his sister prepared to follow Draya to their safe haven.

"Now, does this place have a garbage pit?"

Gar and Shindar looked at each other in disbelief. "What?"

Ignoring their question, Draya continued, "Alright, Shindy, is there a cart around here? We'll fill it full of trash and we'll hide inside. Gar'll push the cart out and that way the scum whose been watching us won't know what's going on 'til it's too late."

"Wait a minute!" asked Gar, "What are you talking about?"

Draya looked annoyed at the question. "There's a maze of caves beneath Soult Tet. Runs under the whole city and beyond. Different places about the city they've dug pits and broken through the roofs of the caverns. They're the sewer-caves. Most people've heard of 'em, but you two wouldn't know. Trust me."

With explanations given and gear gathered, they enacted their plan.

Gar rolled the cart out into the misty darkness and stopped at a stone enclosure. "This is it," he whispered. "I'll tie a rope to that iron spike and you two can climb down while I act like I'm dumping this garbage.

Draya rolled quietly out of the cart and grabbed the rope. "Good, he's still watching the house, he won't even know we're gone 'til morning at least."

With that she dissapeared into the darkness.

Gar and Shindar followed.

Finding themselves standing at the top of a huge pile of refuse and garbage, Draya lit the lantern. The smell was unbearable. Quickly Draya led them down the side of the garbage heap and soon they were winding through the twisting tunnels beneath the city. They had been walking forever it seemed when Draya finally stopped.

"Now, this place is not going to be nice. In fact, it's going to be downright nasty, but it's all we've got right now."

Gar and his sister tried to imagine what Draya could think was nastier than where they were now.

Leading the way, Draya came to a wall of dirt. Looking above, she found a small hole in the ceiling and began to climb toward it.

Gar lifted his sister up on his shoulders and she began to climb. Halfway up, she slipped but Draya reached down and pulled her up. Finally, the three were standing in their new home.

But they weren't the only inhabitants. Dark forms swooped down at the lantern and about their heads. Shindar screamed and fell to the garbage-strewn floor.

"Don't worry, they're just bats. They'll get used to us. Trust me, we'll be safe here."

It was going to take a lot of work to make this hole a haven, but for the night, the three cleared spaces on the floor and curled up amidst

the creatures of the night. Exhaustion allowed them to overlook the desperation of their situation and lulled them into a deep, welcome sleep.

Screams resounded through the corridors of Sageem's palace the following night. The emperor had flown into a frenzied rage at the report of utter failure. Rod in hand, he struck the woman and her spy ruthlessly. After inflicting several blows, he managed to calm himself enough to ask, "Where do you think they went?"

Seeing an opening, the greasy man nodded and sputtered, "M'lord, I can find them. I know the girl...it won't take long."

Seeing an opportunity to once again find the three troublemakers, Sageem finally relented and offered them a chance to redeem themselves.

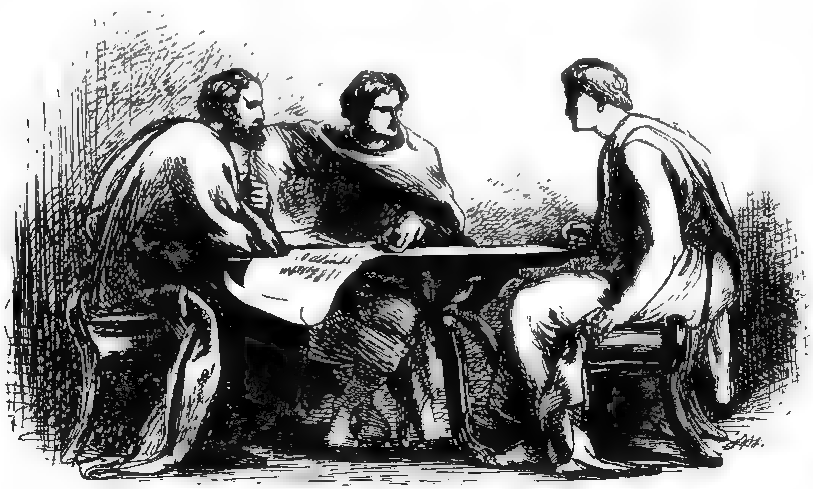
"Get out there and comb every inch of this town. If you haven't found them by this time tomorrow, there'll be no mercy. I've spared you against my better judgement, don't make me regret it."

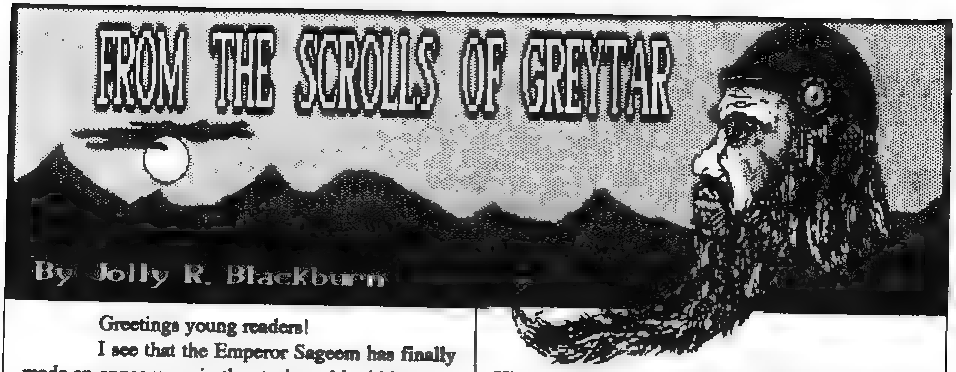
The two disappeared into the night.

Sageem washed their blood from his hands and dressed for bed. He always dreaded evening, for the world of sleep and dreams was beyond his domain. There, he was at the mercy of the darkness in his soul.

Looking up at the winged canopy above his bed, he whispered a prayer to Benyar and hoped it would bring him peace. But it would be another long night for Burnok, another night for hion tea.

Strange that the three who made their bed on the garbage strewn floors of a rat-infested cave should sleep better that night than the Emperor Sageem.





Greetings young readers!

I see that the Emperor Sageem has finally made an appearance in the stories told within these pages. He is a most amazing man, wholly feared and the object of much wonder and awe.

In keeping with my assigned task of providing the historical backdrops to the stories, I thought it fitting that I should dedicate this installment to the Emperor and his affairs.

The capital city of Soult Tet, (refer to the map published in issue no.#2) sits where the Ginge and Soult Rivers meet. At this junction a large hill formed of white sandstone rises up from the Soult river basin. This is the famed Yistain Hill, and is an area rich with history and deeply associated with the god Benyar. In fact the original city which stood on the hill was called Forcar which was haagan for 'Falcon Rock'. Falcons are symbolic of Benyar's strength and power, and the birds of prey once dotted the skies about the area.

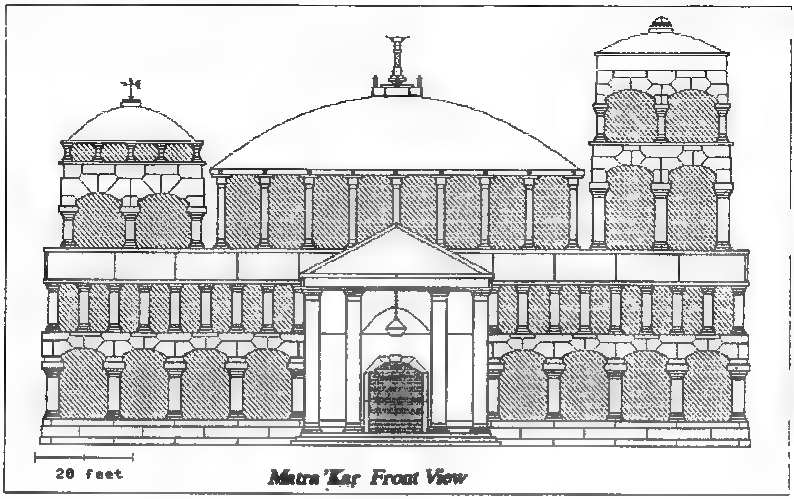
Now the common citizen of Soult Tet could never hope to set foot on the hill, for it is partitioned from the rest of the city; hemmed in with walls and cliffs and heavily guarded. Yistain hill is literally the center of the Empire. Here you will find such famous sites as; the ***Temple of Benyar***, dedicated to the patron god of the Rageans, ***Matra'Kar***, the imperial residence, ***The Grand Aeric***, where the Bin'Parta and the Council conduct their affairs. I could go on and on. From this small hill the destiny of millions are controlled. I could write a book about this small summit which covers only a hundred acres or so. Once I was banished from Yistain hill for courting the daughter of a young Bin'Partan official who... Ah, I ramble again.

We will be spending a lot of time on Yistain hill in the coming months since it will figure largely in the stories. Matra'Kar the Imperial residence will become an especially familiar place.

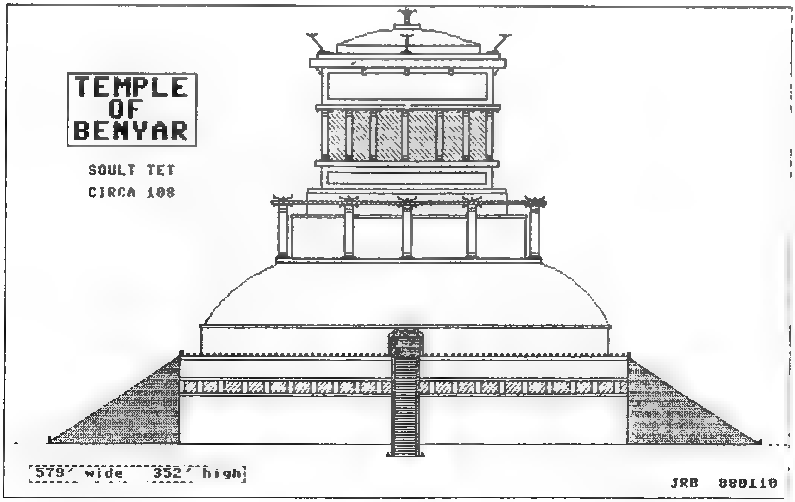
I have consulted with the staff of SHADIS and described the dimensions and design of Matra'Kar in detail. They've come up with some very acurate illustrations which hopefully, will help the reader to visualize it.

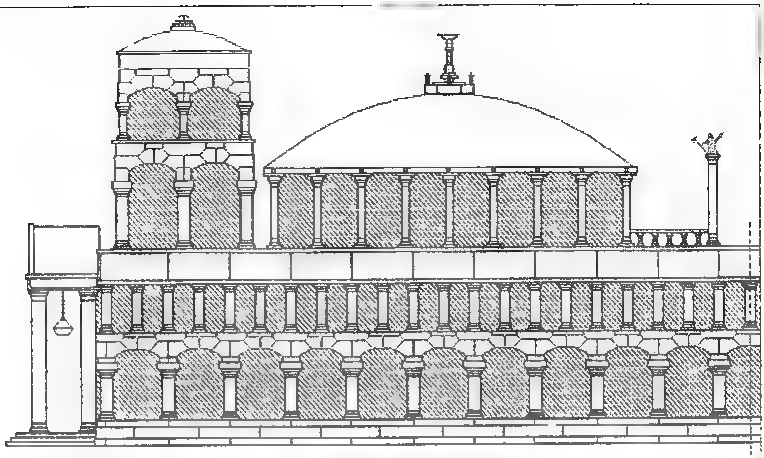
The illustrations are somewhat misleading though. The building itself sits in a large area surrounded by high basalt walls. This area is beautifully laid out with gardens, small shrines and temples. It is the exclusive domain of the Emperor and those few powerful men he allows to enter his circle. Although in appearance and atmosphere it appears to be quite ancient, it is actually of recent design and construction. Less then 100 years old, it was built on the ruins of the Temple of Aknar, which was razed during the Ragean Wars.

The original Imperial Residence still stands on Yartan Rock. Yartan Rock is a column of granite that juts up from the Soult River and is seperated from Yistain hill by only 20 feet of distance. A stone bridge spans this gap and on the narrow precarious plateau of this rock a large fortress was constructed which appears to have sprouted from the natural rock.. The old Residence is cold

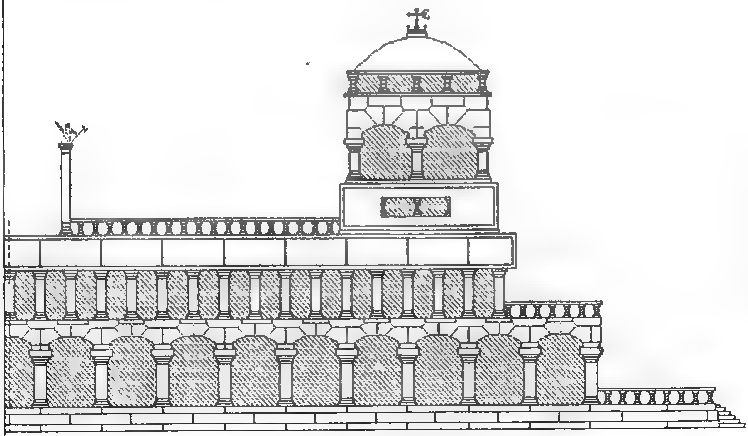


Matra'Kar Front View





Matra 'Kar Side View 1st half



Matra 'Kar Side View 2nd half

and barren. Sageem once described it as a 'prison, windowless and cheerless.' After the earthquake of -5 TR, A large section of the old Residence collapsed into the Soult River. Although repaired, all succeding emperors, truly a supersititious lot, have refused to live there. The old residence is maintained and stocked in case its inherent defensive qualities are needed by the Emperor. *(There was a curious rumor going about that after the Sagenthor Affair, Sageem lived in the old Residence for several months in fear for his life.)*

I had the occasion to enter Matra'Kar on one occasion. Sageem had taken ill and summoned myself and two other scribes to his bedside. It seemed he wanted to commission a translation of the Aldesian Scrolls of the Elder Vayn so that he could take comfort in reading them. After receiving our brief instructions and a small advance payment we were quickly ushered away.

Not wanting to waste such a marvelous opportunity, I managed to bribe our escort with a few coins to take us on a short and very hurried tour of a good part of the Matra'Kar. Such wonders I saw that I could scarce believe that even the Emperor had the means to obtain them. There were great galleries with no apparent purpose other than to impress the observer; central courtyards with flowing fountains and exotic birds. There were works of art that outshone any I had ever seen, hidden in dark recesses where only a handful of men would ever see them over the span of several generations. And libraries! If the heart of a thief ever welled up inside me it was while being led through those endless aisles of scroll cabinets, straining under the weight of thousands of ancient texts.

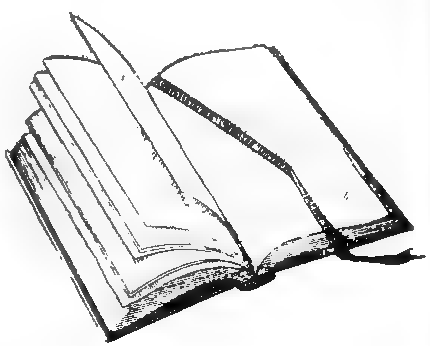
Every aspect of the building was detailed; rich stones, fluted door panels, gold hinges. My mind reeled. I came away from Matra'Kar that day with a wealth of feelings stirring within me. Here, in this most beautiful of places, literally a temple dedicated to the Emperor, the mightest man on the face of Alderac, lay the frail shell of that leader. He was a pale man, with a grey balding head and a rasping cough. The image could not be shaken and I think of it often.

Well, If I can get these sluggards at this magazine off their duffs and force them to work with me, I will try to provide the floor plans, as much as I remember, to satisfy your curiosity.

Very soon, the Temple of Benyar, also on Yistain Hill will become very important in the Alderac Anthologies. I have provided a very crude rendition of it. Sadly, it also does little justice to the real structure. The Temple of Benyar literally dwarfs everything else on Yistain Hill and is a marvel throughout the lands of Alderac. I wish I could convey the sense of awe and wonder that the native Ragean citizen experiences when he sees it for the first time. It must rival the emotions that the devout Jew from your world experiences when he visits Jerusalem for the first time, for it is as much a spiritual experience as anything else.

Well, I see that once again I have surpassed my allotted quota of space. I must tell you sometime about the bats of the Temple of Benyar and their ties with the omens. Fascinating story

Until next issue. □



Letter's Page Continued

on the staff and general info might make a nice article for Spotlight. Another thing you should do is to publish some writer's guidelines for submissions. This helps people to write better, and helps you in editing. If you eventually accept any modules then a module guideline would be a must. (The guidelines that TSR sends out for DUNGEON are excellent.)

Well, keep up the good work and I look forward to issue number 3.

James Minton
Gaston, SC

• I layout SHADIS on my Amiga 500 which is seriously underpowered at 1 MEG of RAM. Shamefully, our masters are still printed on a 24 PIN dotmatrix printer. Laser-printing is just a matter of time and money. As for bios on the staff, we discussed it and have unanimously agreed that we are all pretty boring people. It's rumored that Law once headed a strange cult in Waco Texas, but he won't discuss it until his Parole Board convenes. The Alderac Group is a society that was formed to have an excuse to play games and to make other people wonder who the heck we were. It also looks nice on a business card.

Dear SHADIS,

I thoroughly enjoyed issue no.#2. However I was greatly disturbed that you provided such ample, (and precious) space to I.F.G.S and 'live action' roleplaying.

It is exactly this type of role-playing which has heaped so much criticism upon role-playing as a whole. The fact that all the major game companies have steered clear of this type of lunacy should be evident that even the smell of money can't cover up the stink of live action gaming. This is a serious problem. A few years ago at the height of the 'Killer' craze a young student was actually killed by a campus security guard.

One incident like that can undo years of work at cleaning up the RPG image. Just look what happened to D&D when one boy, supposedly got lost in the steam tunnels playing live action D&D. That one is still thrown in our faces. People love to put labels on groups they don't understand. It doesn't matter if the boy who committed suicide was on drugs, had family problems etc. The fact that he played D&D will be singled out as the single root of the problem.

My point is this. Table-top gaming is low key. Live action role-playing is high visibility. People who have no inclination of what a role-playing game is are apt to stumble upon such a group in the woods, in the park, etc. It has happened in the past, and local media has a field day with it. "Elderly Couple terrorized by sword wielding youths!!" Please, leave I.F.G.S and other live-action gamers to themselves and let's keep Shadis out of a quagmire it could never climb out of.

Dave Preston
Monterey, CA

Editorial Continued

vast backdrop of world events unfolding around the players. Running such a campaign involves a lot of work, record keeping, world development etc. But such tasks are my bread and butter and represent what draws me to role-playing over and over again. However times arise when a good old-fashioned Hack and Slash outing is called for or perhaps what I call a 'Silly-Session,' something akin to Monty Python and the Holy Grail. If you sit down at the gaming table and feel a yawn coming on, or if players begin to cancel out on you in favor of watching reruns of the Brady Bunch, perhaps you should try something different. It can be a stand-alone session that doesn't effect the major campaign if you're afraid of disrupting things.

The point is to have fun and entertain the players. You can't learn to paint without getting your hands dirty, and likewise you can't master role-playing without jumping in with both feet. Too much emphasis has been put on various gaming styles and techniques. There are those who would have you believe that RPGs are a high-tech science that only the professionals should attempt to alter or experiment with. Don't believe it. The success of RPGs are largely due to their flexibility and User-friendliness.

What I'm trying to say is this; Play the game in the manner that is most enjoyable for you and your players. Time is the best teacher. You will find which methods are better and which ones retard good gaming in your particular group. Your home-brewed critical hit tables might make the folks at Lake Geneva cringe, but if the players accept and enjoy them, who cares? So forget what the experts say if you have a notion to try something different and play with your gut-feelings.

Now to the issue at hand. As George Vrbanic's cover might suggest this issue has a lot to do with death. Besides the Resurrection debate in *Face Off*, you will find a mini-module dealing with the undead. Many of you have been clamoring for modules and adventures. The Hungry Undead, was designed as a mini-adventure which can be easily altered/expanded to suit the needs of the DM.

If you enjoy such offerings let us know so that we can provide them in future issues. If not then send us a note stating "STOP DOING THAT!", and we'll do just that.

By the way, B.A. Felton is on an extended holiday in Beirut doing research on his quasi-military role-playing game 'Don't Shoot I'm a Canadian!' and neglected to forward his Spotlight column.

We have a few exciting surprises in line for next issue. Just confirmed that Gary Gygax, (and if you don't know who he is welcome to planet Earth!) will be granting us an interview. We'll be trying to get him to talk about his secretive new project, (seven years in the works) and about role-playing in general.

Well, hope you enjoy the issue. Til next time.

Jolly R. Blackburn
May 9, 1990

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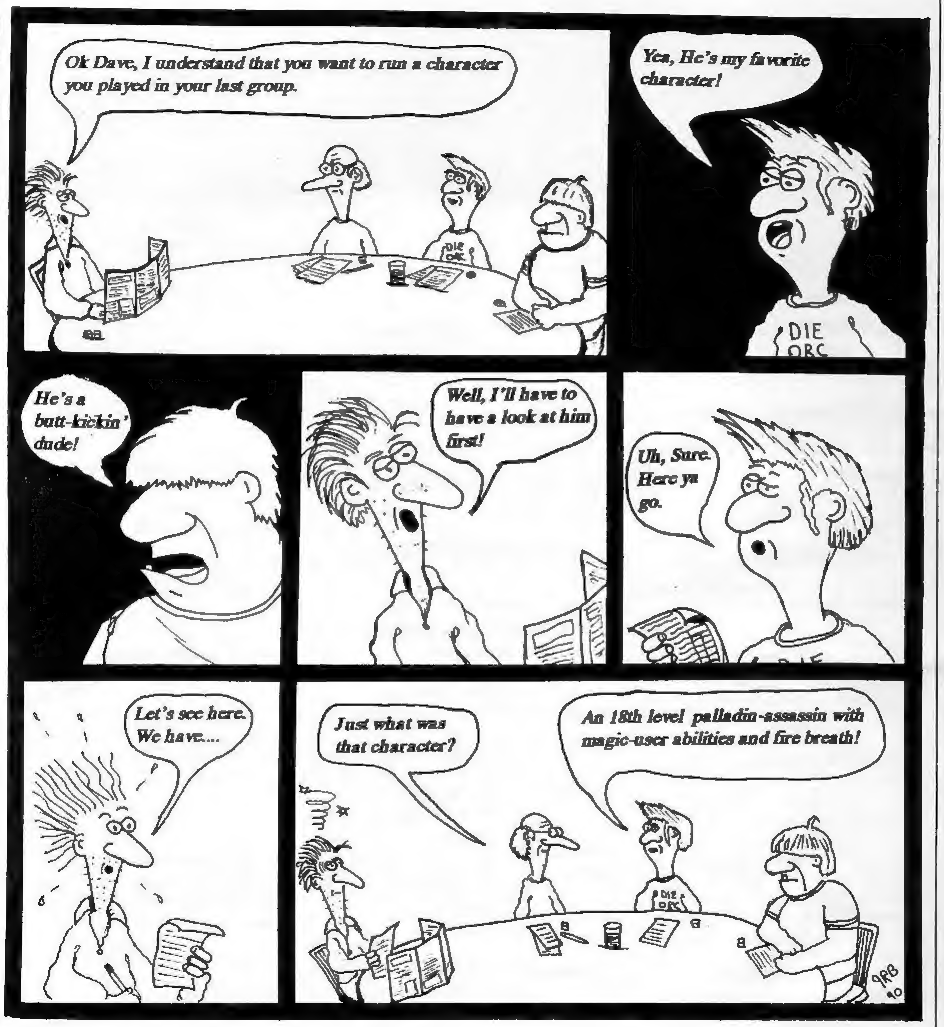

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